the weekly Standard

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UNDER THE BUS

More bumps in the road for Obama

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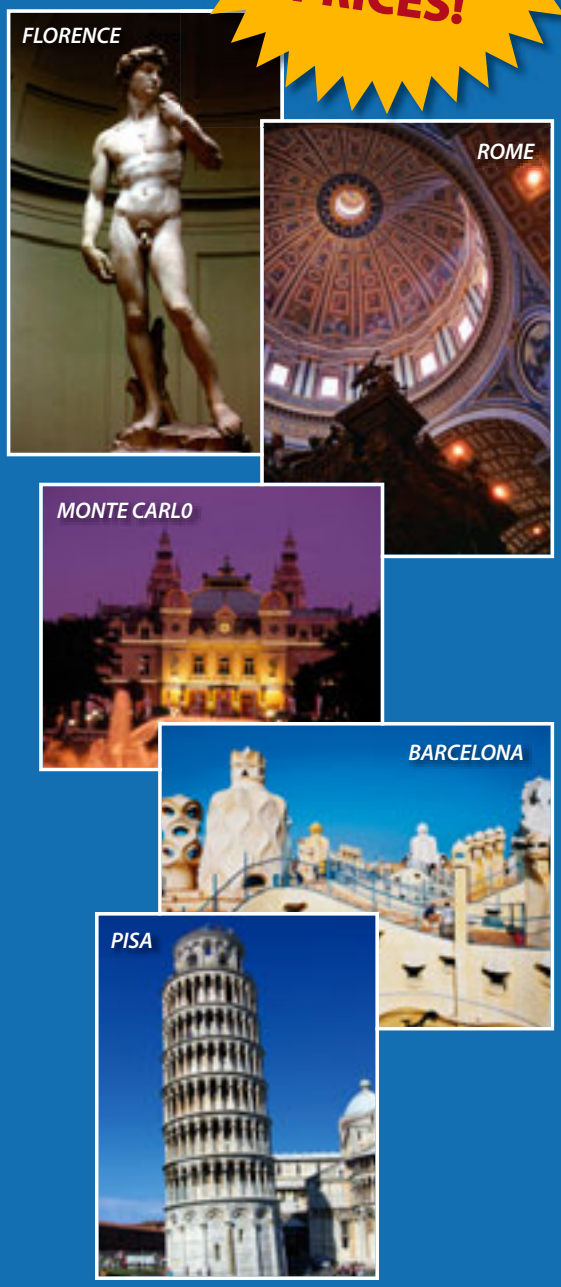

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Leading by Example

During an Iowa Public Television presidential forum back on November 9, 2007—a full year before he was elected—Barack Obama was asked to list "some examples of what you will tell Americans that we don't necessarily want to hear."

"Number one," he said, "We're going to have to start doing a better job on conserving energy." Americans have to stop driving their "big SUVs" and leaving the lights on in rooms throughout their houses.

He went further at an event in May. "We can't drive our SUVs and eat as much as we want and keep our homes on 72 degrees at all times," Obama said.

Energy conservation is so important, in fact, that Obama wants to spend $6.2 billion on "weatherizing" 1 million American homes as part of his stimulus package. "We're going to train people who are out of work, including young people, to do the weatherization," he explained to Katie Couric last week. "As a consequence of weatherization, our energy bills go down and we reduce our dependence on foreign oil. What would be a more effective stimulus package than that?" (Well, payroll tax cuts, to suggest just one. But we digress.) It's funny how quickly tough love can turn into a government handout.

President Obama's commitment to your energy conservation cannot be doubted. But what about his own? In May, Obama promised to "lead by example" and when he touted energy conservation in Iowa, he declared: "We are going to have to change our habits."

He's using "we" figuratively.

After the shivering American public was exposed to several pictures of the new president working in the Oval Office without a jacket, his top adviser offered this as an explanation.

"He's from Hawaii, okay?" top adviser David Axelrod, told the *New York Times*. "He likes it warm. You could grow orchids in there."

CNN Washington bureau chief David Bohrman visited the White House last week. "The Oval Office is just as hot as they say it is," he told *Politico*. "It was 80 degrees in there!"

So while Kentucky calls in the military to help save its human popsicles and the rest of the country huddles together for warmth because we listened to Obama on the campaign trail, our new president is melting polar ice caps and funding Saudi madrassas because the Oval Sauna best reminds him of home? Weren't we told throughout the campaign that the guy is Chicago-tough?

Although the new president went to the Energy Department to speak last week, he is apparently unfamiliar with its "Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home."

> Heating and cooling your home uses more energy and drains more energy dollars than any other system in your home. Typically, 46% of your utility bill goes for heating and cooling. What's more, heating and cooling systems in the United States together emit 150 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, adding to global climate change.

Tip #1?

"Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer."

We are going to have to change our habits. ♦

What's Bugging Bill Gates?

Apparently it is not enough for Bill Gates to allow bugs to plague our Microsoft Office Windows software (or, God forbid, Vista). No, he's got to let us have the real thing. Last week at the Technology, Entertainment, Design Conference in Long Beach, California, the founder of Microsoft opened a jar filled with mosquitoes before his captive audience, saying, "Malaria is spread by mosquitoes. I brought some here. I'll let them roam around. There is no reason only poor people should be infected."

Gates waited a moment before assuring everyone the mosquitoes he just unleashed did not, in fact, carry malaria. Of course the high profile crowd of technology and media elites still had to swat the pesky insects away but, at the very least, it made for a memorable presentation. (The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the fight against malaria.) We just hope Gates doesn't start taking an interest in the fight against dysentery. ♦

Zinni Under the Bus

General Anthony Zinni (U.S. Army, Ret.) was known to refer to the Bush administration's prewar efforts at aiding the Iraqi opposition as a "Bay of Goats proposition." The reference to the Bay of Pigs fiasco was a none-too-subtle dig at the competence of groups like the Iraqi National Congress that were making promises they couldn't keep.

When the Obama administration promised Zinni the high-profile post of ambassador to Iraq only to revoke

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the offer days later and with no explanation, he was similarly unrestrained in his criticism.

The snub was first reported by the *Washington Times* on Wednesday morning, February 4, with Zinni telling the paper that National Security Adviser Jim Jones, like Zinni a retired four-star general, had offered him the job two weeks ago and that a subsequent conversation with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had confirmed it. Zinni started making arrangements, but all of a sudden he couldn't get his calls returned by the Obama White House. When Zinni finally got through to Jones the night of February 2, he was told that the administration had instead decided to give the job to Christopher Hill, the career diplomat who spent the last four years heading up the U.S. delegation to the Six Party Talks with North Korea and has precisely nothing to show for his work.

Jones offered no explanation for the reversal. "That kind of bothered me," Zinni told the paper. "I was told that I had it." By Wednesday afternoon, Zinni was getting more specific, and more colorful, in his recounting of the story. He told a blogger at *Foreign Policy* that Clinton had summoned him to the State Department for a meeting to discuss his new posting and that Vice President Joe Biden had even called to congratulate him on his appointment.

When Zinni was finally told that he'd been passed over, Jones offered him a consolation prize—ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Zinni's response, as quoted by the *New York Times*: "I told them to stick it where the sun don't shine." The confusion was a stark contrast to the Obama machine of 2008 and prompted one senior adviser to tell *Politico*, "I don't know who's doing what, who's in charge." Maybe the Bay of Goats is located on the Potomac. ♦

Department of Obama Studies?

Over at *National Review Online*, John Derbyshire notes that if you go to a reputable university to study English literature you should "expect to encounter the great names" of Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton. And "at Ohio State University, one of those great names will be Barack Obama." He links to the OSU course catalogue for spring quarter 2009, which features a section of English 275: Thematic Approaches to Literature bearing the title, "Barack Obama and/as Literature." The course raises the Big Questions of the day: "What do his words (his books and speeches) say about him as a writer? What do his literary interests say about the relevance of literature to contemporary American politics and culture? How does race affect this literary conversation?" Derbyshire predicts the imminent creation of "the first college Obama Studies Department." The Scrapbook expects to see a Barack Obama University shortly thereafter. ♦

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Casual

He's a Pepper, Too

A recent edition of *Newsweek* ran a photograph of Barack Obama that was taken in the White House the morning of January 20, just after the Obamas and the Bushes had finished coffee and were about to leave for the inauguration. The caption noted that Obama was fussing with his tie, which he was, but it failed to observe the most important aspect of the photo—that on a table in front of Obama, right next to an elegant silver coffee urn, stood a bottle of Diet Dr Pepper.

I don't know who asked for Dr Pepper, the Bushes or the Obamas or someone else. Maybe an Obama aide: I'm told someone "close" to the president is a big fan of the drink.

I am too. I discovered it early in life. I was born in Texas, and Dr Pepper happens to be the national soft drink of our state (understand, Texas has national things).

The drink was invented in Texas. In 1885 pharmacist Charles Alderton of the Old Corner Drug Store in Waco mixed fruit extracts and sweeteners to make a syrup for a new carbonated drink. The store's owner, Wade Morrison, really liked it. So did fountain customers. Word of the drink spread, and people came in asking for "a Waco." Soon Morrison named it "Dr. Pepper"—though just why remains unclear. (The period in the name was dropped in 1950.)

As demand for the drink grew, Morrison sold the syrup to other fountain operators in Waco. Eventually he and a partner built their own bottling company. They also sold the right to produce and distribute Dr Pepper to bottlers in nearby towns. It wasn't long before Dallas became the headquarters of the Dr Pepper Company, which eventually began moving product (as they say) outside the state.

I think my liking for Dr Pepper has something to do with the many occasions I visited my grandmother, Lolla Eastland, who was born a decade after Alderton mixed that first Dr Pepper. The drink had become quite popular in Texas when Lolla and her husband, who lived in Hillsboro, a small town near Waco, began raising their family. Back then the bottles bore such confident mottoes as "King of Beverages" and "Good for Life!" And Lolla kept buying the drink once the grandchildren started coming.

DR. PEPPER MUSEUM / FREE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

She kept wooden cases full of Dr Pepper on the back porch, right near the screen door that we wore out, coming and going, the mosquitoes joining us in the sweltering summers. The cases had capacity for 24 of the old six-ounce bottles, and we made sure to keep a few cooling in the icebox.

Lolla also had some Coca-Cola around, but we didn't like it as much. Maybe because Dr Pepper was older by a year—Coke was invented in 1886, in Georgia—though none of us were historian enough to know that. We did know that Dr Pepper was a Texas original, a provincial but conclusive argument for its superiority.

The logo we usually saw on the Dr Pepper bottles at Lolla's was a circle on which the numbers 10, 2, and 4 were placed right where they'd be if the circle were the face of a clock. And those were the times you were supposed to drink Dr Pepper—three per day. Which, of course, is what Dr Pepper marketers wanted you to think.

Years later I learned that this pitch drew on a Columbia University study concluding that people experience a sugar "letdown" at the hours of 10:30 A.M., 2:30 P.M., and 4:30 P.M. The marketers saw their drink as the perfect solution: It would pick you up. I don't recall any of us cousins ever growing faint, but we were delighted to have three times daily to present our case for popping another cap. If only we'd known that an Ivy League study was on our side. . . . On second thought, that wouldn't have impressed us much.

For Dr Pepper as for its competitors, the glass bottles used for so many decades yielded to cans in the 1960s, and soon plastic bottles. It was around that time, too, that the first Diet Dr Pepper appeared. It was labeled Dietetic Dr Pepper. And it was a flop. Dietetic sounded a lot like diabetic, and people thought the drink was some kind of medicine. Sugar-free Dr Pepper, introduced later, though without that problem, never really caught on.

As the nonsugar sweeteners improved, the Diet Dr Pepper in that White House photo eventually was brought to fizz. Diet DP, smooth as can be, has been a big hit. And yes, I'm having one right now, though I still like regular DP, notwithstanding the calories. If only they would bring back the old logos. King of Beverages—I'll say.

Terry Eastland

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the weekly Standard

Testing 1-2-3

Joe Biden was right.

That's not a sentence we expect to type too often over the next four years, but it's proper to give credit where credit is due. And, on October 19, at a fundraiser in Seattle, the vice-presidential candidate explained:

> And here's the point I want to make. Mark my words. Mark my words. It will not be six months before the world tests Barack Obama. . . . Remember I said it standing here if you don't remember anything else I said. Watch, we're gonna have an international crisis, a generated crisis, to test the mettle of this guy. . . . I can give you at least four or five scenarios from where it might originate. . . . They may emanate from the Middle East. They may emanate from the sub-continent. They may emanate from Russia's newly emboldened position.

Various unsavory characters do seem to have marked Biden's words.

The Iranian regime, having spent the first couple of weeks of Barack Obama's presidency preemptively scorning his overtures, mocking his weakness, and assuring the world its nuclear program is nonnegotiable, last Tuesday reported it had launched a satellite into orbit, making clear that Iran intends to have a missile launch capability on which to deploy its nuclear warheads.

Sounds like a test by the mullahs.

On the same day as the Iranian satellite launch, it was reported that, under pressure and inducements from Russia, Kyrgyzstan would no longer allow the United States to use an airbase that supports coalition military operations in Afghanistan. This came as Obama plans to increase U.S. force levels in Afghanistan, and the already overburdened supply lines from Pakistan seem increasingly vulnerable to attacks from Taliban forces in that country's frontier areas.

Sounds like a test by Vladimir Putin.

And on that very same day, North Korea, having in the first week of the Obama presidency scrapped all its agreements with South Korea and warned of war on the Korean peninsula, was reported to be preparing to test a new ballistic missile, the Taepodong-2, which is intended to eventually have a long enough range to hit U.S. territory.

Sounds like a test by Kim Jong-Il.

Now these aren't big tests. They're more like pop quizzes, preparatory to the real exams. And it's understandable that the Obama administration, whose foreign policy apparatus is not yet fully staffed and, indeed, seems barely organized, hasn't responded much to them one way or the other.

But these quizzes are a taste of what's to come. And they suggest Obama had better focus on the commander in chief part of his job, not just on his domestic concerns.

In this respect, the most worrisome signal of the past week was something the president said last Tuesday, in one of his stimulus-promoting interviews, the very day all these testing foreign policy developments were reported. Obama assured CNN's Anderson Cooper, "Look, the only measure of my success as president, when people look back five years from now or nine years from now, is going to be, did I get this economy fixed?"

We hope this was just inflated rhetoric used to further hype the stimulus package. We trust Obama doesn't believe the economy will be the only measure—or even the primary measure—of his success as president. This wasn't even the case for Franklin D. Roosevelt, who took over the country in the middle of the Depression. And every president since World War II—with the possible exception of Bill Clinton in that brief post-Cold War/pre-September 11 holiday from history—has been judged more centrally and fundamentally for his foreign policy performance than for his economic efforts.

After all, the economy will sooner or later fix itself. Government actions can help or hurt, and the debate over those actions is important. But whatever happens with the stimulus package, Obama is neither going to "fix" nor destroy the economy. There will eventually be an economic recovery.

But there won't be a recovery—at least not an easy one—from a world in which American power recedes, in which jihadists and dictators are empowered, in which nuclear proliferation accelerates, in which terror groups get access to weapons of mass destruction. There's no natural recovery if jihadist Iran goes nuclear or nuclear Pakistan goes jihadist. Is our new commander in chief fully aware how dangerous the world can get, and how fast, when America is weak or distracted? He might reflect on the consequences of our neglect of our foreign policy in 1933-39, when we were obsessed with our economic problems—or even in 1993–2000.

So it's not all about the economy—and President Obama should know better than to say so. He wants to say so because he's likely to be a "success" with respect to the economy. Foreign policy is tougher. But that's no excuse for avoiding his responsibilities.

Even if it means acknowledging that Joe Biden was right.

—*William Kristol*

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Here Comes the State

In 2001, Brink Lindsey wrote *Against the Dead Hand*, in which he contrasted the "dead hand" of central economic planning with the "invisible hand" of the market. The distinction is memorable. It is also slightly misleading. These days, the "dead hand" is very much alive.

Look around. The state has never been more in vogue. Everywhere one turns, central governments are intervening in markets. For political elites, the question is no longer whether the state has an obligation to provide economic security for its citizens. The question is how to do it.

To some degree, this move toward government intervention is natural. Reasonable, even. In times of crisis, people want protection. Randolph Bourne famously wrote that war is the health of the state. He forgot recession. And this particular recession looks like a doozy. Employment and consumer spending may reach lows not seen in a generation. There will be a recovery. But the timing of that recovery depends on what the government does in response.

Voters, then, have every reason to expect from Washington a stimulus bill that will help restore growth. But they aren't getting one. The stimulus plan is flawed. It marries a few measures that count as stimulus with tons of spending on a domestic agenda that the Democrats have waited years to push through Congress. Why? Because Obama and the Democrats who run Congress are more interested in an idea than they are in economic recovery.

That idea has two components. One: The conservative era, with its more-free-than-not markets, is over. Two: Now is the time to complete the American welfare state by (a) introducing universal health care and (b) fostering economic equality through higher taxes on income, capital, and estates and increased union membership.

The stimulus bill needs to be seen in this light. It is just the beginning. For Obama, the stimulus is a "down payment" on "investments" in health care, alternative energy, education, scientific and medical research, and infrastructure. When you buy a car, you don't stop with the down payment. There are many, many more "payments" to come. How large will these payments be? How long will we be paying them?

Our newly political economy has diverse sectors. This week the administration will lay out its rescue for the banking sector. The plan likely will combine buying up bad mortgage-backed securities with guaranteeing financial institutions' balance sheets. This might or might not help the global financial system. What it definitely will do is further enmesh the government in that system.

Obama, through no fault of his own, inherited a government that has stakes in the country's largest banks and owns what was once the world's largest insurer. Last week he used that authority to set compensation levels for some executives whose institutions receive public money. And his use of his authority is likely to grow in the coming months.

Obama and Congress want the banks to lend to consumers whose finances remain shaky. The banks will have to listen, because they are on the hook. And when the debtors can't repay the debts, who will the creditors turn to? You know who.

In the 1990s, Japan's zombie banks contributed mightily to its Lost Decade. In slow, halting steps, America is creating its own zombie army. The results will be the same.

Then, speaking of the living dead, there's the Detroit Three. Last year Congress rejected Tennessee senator Bob Corker's restructuring plan, missing an opportunity to craft a responsible rescue for American automakers. So Bush bailed out GM and Chrysler (Ford says it doesn't need the cash).

GM and Chrysler will be back for more. But this time Obama and Congress will tie any financial assistance to their own political objectives. Thus the American auto industry will remain alive on life support, forced to manufacture green cars that make the Natural Resources Defense Council happy but don't make a profit.

What's most remarkable about this assertion of government authority over the economy is how little debate has accompanied it. Up until last week, when conservative criticism of the stimulus bill put liberals on defense, the return of the dead hand was met with almost no political opposition.

It's remarkable. You encounter one liberal thinker after another who has all these grand plans for the way society ought to work, but exhibits little or no awareness of the American welfare state's long and troubled history. There's an entire literature out there dealing with the problems that government intervention in the economy creates, and explaining just how hard it is to improve society through politics. Has anyone been reading in it?

The United States has plenty of problems. Government has a role in addressing them. That's not the issue. Nor is the issue government spending. Public policies meant to combat social pathology can work. America has always had, and will continue to have, a mixed economy. And there is no political constituency for ending Social Security or Medicare or radically scaling back American commitments abroad. The sooner conservatives recognize this, the better.

The issue is hubris. The issue is group-think. The issue is that Democrats are marching lockstep down a road that has been trod before, with nary a thought of the consequences. They ought to start preparing for the inevitable populist reaction. It will be swift. It won't be pretty.

—Matthew Continetti

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First, Do No Harm

Congressional Republicans were right to vote against the stimulus.

BY FRED BARNES

GARY LOCKE

John McCain is on to something. No stimulus bill—that is, no "economic recovery" package at all—"is better" than President Obama's bill, McCain says. Sure, he'd prefer his own alternative. At $445 billion, it would cost roughly half Obama's bill. And Republican senators unanimously voted for it. But Democrats shot it down as if it were a trifle. What Obama wants is more spending. "That's the whole point!" the president blurted out last week in a moment of candor.

McCain's stand is significant in a way no other Republican senator's would be. He's not the run-of-the-mill Republican making a partisan point. He's hardly a Limbaugh dittohead. McCain is the Senate's most relentless seeker of bipartisan compromise. His colleagues feared he might seek the media's favor by going along with Obama.

But Obama left McCain and nearly every other Republican in Congress with only one option: Just say no. That's what Republican House members said when they voted unanimously against Obamanomics. And on its merits, the Obama bill cries out for rejection. It's dangerously expensive, crammed with pork, and bereft of credible economic incentives.

But, yes, there's political risk in opposing it. An economic recovery may begin later this year not because of the Obama bill but in spite of it. Obama would step forward shamelessly to claim credit. And you can imagine the Democratic attacks on Republicans for opposing aid for college students, emergency help for strapped homeowners, funds for medical research, and all the other non-stimulative stuff in the bill. Politics can be unfair.

I'm assuming Democrats won't embarrass Obama by failing to enact his first major piece of legislation when the final vote comes this week or next. Why would they balk? Like Obama, they adore spending. Never in the congressional careers of the current crop of Democrats has there been an opportunity for a spendfest like this. They will take full advantage.

For House Republicans, fearlessly opposing the Obama package turned out to be a feel-good vote. Their popularity increased (okay, only slightly) and their self-esteem soared for the first time in years. Republican senators should experience the same rush of exhilaration by voting no.

Two facts all but forced Republicans to adopt the zero option. Partisan zeal wasn't one of them.

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Republicans were ready to be pawns in a bipartisan game. But Obama's promise to bring the parties together played out in form (he courted Republicans) rather than substance (he declined to compromise). Republicans got nothing in the bill. That was fact number one. And after they objected to the cost of the House version ($819 billion, not counting the debt payments), the measure grew larger in the Senate. That was the second fact.

Democrats couldn't hide their self-consciousness about the excesses of their own bill. Supporters made few TV appearances to defend it and rarely talked about specific spending items. Obama sounded like Al Gore on global warming. The more the case for man-made warming falls apart, the more hysterical Gore gets about an imminent catastrophe. The more public support his bill loses, the more Obama embraces fear-mongering. "The failure to act, and act now," the president said last week, "will turn a crisis into a catastrophe."

Enacting the Obama bill won't help. Its tax cuts are minimal and consist mainly of cash payments, not incentives to invest. Yet cutting taxes has a history worth emulating. Harvard economist Robert Barro put it this way in an interview with the *Atlantic*:

> It worked to expand GDP, for example, in '63 and '64 with the Kennedy/Johnson cuts. And then [with] Reagan twice in '81 and '83 and then in '86. And then the Bush 2003 tax cutting program. Those all worked in the sense of promoting economic growth in a short time frame.

Obama's most serious stab at stimulus is $30 billion or so for infrastructure. But it takes many months, even years, to get highway and bridge projects going. There just aren't many "shovel-ready" projects. The remainder of the bill is stimulative only if you believe that spending for spending's sake—spending on everything from "neighborhood stabilization activities" to livestock insurance—will stir the animal spirits now dormant in the economy.

Job creation? The problem is the jobs that might be generated by the bill don't match the jobs that have been lost. True, the $200 billion bailout of state governments might save jobs. But many states don't need a bailout. I talked to state treasurers from Indiana, Nebraska, and Mississippi last week. They said their states don't need the money. But they're likely to take it: approximately $6 billion for the three states.

A fair question is whether the economy actually requires stimulus. Large, across-the-board cuts would be nice—McCain wants to slash the corporate tax rate—but there's already plenty of stimulus in place. The drop in the price of gasoline is the equivalent of a massive tax cut geared toward the less wealthy. And the business cycle hasn't been repealed.

There's also the bank bailout. A second payment of $350 billion will soon be distributed with many billions more to follow. Nor is the Federal Reserve, having reduced interest rates to near zero, sitting on its hands. The Fed is buying up tens of billions in government-guaranteed mortgage securities and Treasury bonds and increasing the money supply.

Republicans understand the recession causes pain they must deal with. Extending unemployment benefits is necessary with the jobless rate rising to 7.6 percent. For those who lose their health insurance along with their job, a bonus benefit could be added to pay at least for catastrophic insurance. All this can be done for tens of billions, not the many hundreds demanded by Obama and Democrats.

Voting against the Obama tide was easy for conservative Republicans. But consider McCain's situation. By endorsing the Obama bill, he'd assure himself a prominent spot at the White House signing ceremony. The media would lovebomb him and declare the old straight-talking maverick alive and well. That's a lot to give up. But it can't match the joy of doing the right thing. ♦

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Standing Behind Daschle . . .

Way behind.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Newscom / AFP Photo

When Barack Obama was asked last Monday if he still supported Tom Daschle, his embattled Health and Human Services nominee, the president gave a firm one-word response: "Absolutely."

The preceding Friday night, news had broken that Daschle had failed to pay more than $140,000 in back taxes, primarily owed on a chauffeur-driven Cadillac, which was loaned to Daschle by his mega-millionaire friend and employer Leo Hindery. Daschle neglected to report the personal use of the car and driver, totaling more than $250,000 over three years, as taxable income. As White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said on Monday of Daschle's tax problems, "Nobody's perfect."

Following a closed Senate Finance Committee meeting Monday night, Democratic senators stood in solidarity with Daschle. The former Senate majority leader apologized to "President Obama, to my colleagues, and to the American people" for his "completely inadvertent" tax errors. Daschle's former colleagues defended his integrity and endorsed his nomination "with vigor," in the words of West Virginia's Jay Rockefeller.

Then on Tuesday morning Daschle called up the president and asked that his nomination for HHS secretary be withdrawn. "It sounded as though he were tearful," NBC's Andrea Mitchell reported moments after she spoke with Daschle over the phone about his withdrawal.

President Obama said in a statement that he felt "sadness and regret" over Daschle's withdrawal and told CBS's Katie Couric that Daschle

> made a mistake and a pretty big one when it came to these taxes. He didn't offer excuses and I don't think there is an excuse and what became apparent was that not only could this be a distraction, but I don't want my administration to be sending a message that there are two sets of rules: one for prominent people and one for ordinary folks who have to pay their taxes everyday.

"Did I screw up in this situation?" Obama asked during his NBC interview. "Absolutely."

What had changed Obama's mind between Monday, when he had absolute confidence in Daschle, and Tuesday, when he claimed he had screwed up with the nomination, is not entirely clear.

On Monday, we knew that Daschle had accepted a car and driver from Leo Hindery, managing partner of InterMedia Partners, a private equity firm from which Daschle received $1 million annually for consulting services. Daschle said he thought the car and driver was a gift, but in June, around the time Obama sewed up the Democratic nomination, Daschle told his accountant to check and see whether his use of the car ought to be considered taxable income. Daschle did not pay his taxes in full until January 4. (Daschle also had tax errors regarding some charitable gifts, and InterMedia failed to report one month's worth of income.)

It had already come out that the Senate Finance Committee was investigating whether Daschle's trips to the Bahamas and the Middle East on the corporate jet of EduCap, a nonprofit organization that provides loans to students at interest rates as high as 18 percent, ought to be considered taxable income as well. (EduCap's charitable status is itself under investigation by the IRS.)

On Friday *Politico* also reported on $220,000 in speaking fees Daschle took from health care groups—some of which had lobbied him as recently

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as the previous week. Then, on Sunday, a damaging quotation from Daschle began making the rounds on the blogs. "Make no mistake, tax cheaters cheat us all, and the IRS should enforce our laws to the letter," Daschle said on the floor of the Senate in 1998.

By Tuesday the political storm had grown more intense. That morning, *Politico* reported that Democrats alleged Daschle had tried to get Hindery a job in the Obama administration, and a round of newspaper editorials called on Daschle to step down.

Far more devastating than the 1998 statement about tax cheaters was a 1986 Daschle campaign ad that popped up on YouTube on Tuesday morning, where Daschle drives around Washington in a 1971 Pontiac, unlike elite Washingtonians in their "BMWs and limos." "Sure it's rusted, and it burns a little oil," the narrator says. "But after 15 years and 238,000 miles, Tom Daschle still drives his old car to work every day. Maybe he's sentimental—or just cheap. Whatever the case, isn't it too bad the rest of Washington doesn't understand that a penny saved is a penny earned?"

The pre-limousine Daschle: A 1986 ad touted his old Pontiac.

More and more things were appearing that would have made Daschle's confirmation hearings deeply embarrassing. According to one Senate source, Daschle's accountant made a "conservative estimate" of his use of the limo service, so his total tax liability might have increased after more thorough investigation. The Finance Committee's EduCap investigation report might have provided more damaging information. What's more, Daschle had a history of tax problems. As Meghan Clyne reported in 2004 for *National Review*, Daschle wrongly claimed residency in Washington, D.C., in order to gain a $300 tax exemption on his home. Had a public hearing occurred, senators would certainly have raised these issues, requested emails between Daschle and his accountant, and possibly unearthed more damaging information.

The crucial event on Tuesday, though, might have been the withdrawal of Obama's nominee for "chief performance officer," Nancy Killefer. The District of Columbia had filed a $946.69 tax lien against her home in 2005 as Killefer had failed to pay $298 in unemployment compensation tax on household help (the amount included interest and penalties). She had paid off the lien within five months of being notified, and its existence had been reported by the Associated Press on January 8, the day after Obama announced her nomination. Why did she step down on February 3, in the midst of the Daschle controversy? Did someone convince Killefer to throw herself under the bus, knowing that Daschle would be dragged along with her? Or did the White House just decide to clear the decks?

Daschle told Andrea Mitchell that a *New York Times* editorial calling for his withdrawal convinced him that he couldn't "pass health care [reform] if I am too much of a distraction." He also cited criticism from some Republicans as a reason for stepping down.

What Daschle didn't do was answer the lingering questions of why, if he thought the limo service was a gift, he flagged the issue for his accountant in June? In the Monday night closed-door Finance Committee meeting, as in other meetings with committee staff, Daschle could not provide an answer to this question, according to Senate sources. Did Daschle raise the issue with his accountant just in case he was nominated for a cabinet position? Did he intend to pay the tax if he weren't nominated for a cabinet post? These are some of the uncomfortable questions Daschle would have had to answer in public during a confirmation hearing.

Also far from clear is that Daschle knowingly did anything wrong in the way that Treasury secretary Tim Geithner did. Geithner failed to pay the IRS $48,000, mostly on self-employment taxes incurred while working at the International Monetary Fund. During his confirmation hearing, it was revealed that the IMF reimbursed Geithner for his self-employment taxes, that the IMF repeatedly reminded him to pay, and that he had signed documents saying he would do so.

Barack Obama is far closer to Daschle than he is to Geithner. (Daschle helped fill Obama's Senate staff in 2005 and provided a critical early endorsement of his presidential bid.) Obama knew that Daschle had failed to pay taxes on Monday, and he knew that Daschle had failed to pay taxes on Tuesday. If Obama doesn't want to send the message that there are "two sets of rules"—one for members of his administration and one for ordinary citizens—then why did Daschle have to go if Geithner got to stay? When Charles Gibson asked Obama this question on Tuesday, the president dodged, saying, "Well, as I said, I think everybody makes mistakes. Tim owned up to them. And I think I've been very clear of the fact that this was a bad mistake." That's almost exactly as he described Daschle's transgressions on Tuesday. Some mistakes are apparently more inconvenient than others. ♦

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Paving the Way for Reagan

Jack Kemp's enduring influence.

BY KENNETH TOMLINSON

There are some people you cannot imagine ill. One such person is Jack Kemp, the onetime Buffalo Bills quarterback, longtime House Republican leader and godfather to the supply-side economics movement. Whatever he was doing, Jack always has been in perpetual motion.

But the shock of his serious battle with cancer has prompted many of us to reflect on one indisputable fact. Without Jack Kemp, there would have been no Reagan Revolution. He was John the Baptist to "the Oldest and Wisest"—and in doing so became one of the most influential political figures of our time.

Had it not been for the radical 30 percent across-the-board tax rate cut that Kemp sold to candidate Reagan, America never would have realized the prosperity of the Reagan era and beyond. (Looking back, can you imagine a society that had accepted the legitimacy of 70 percent tax rates on our best producers?) By the sheer force of his evangelistic personality, he brought supply-side economic theories to influential journalists and politicians—and also to Ronald Reagan—legitimizing the concept that tax rate cuts were essential to unleash the creativity and innovation of the American dream.

Considering the crushing egos of the brilliant band of volatile individuals who constituted the supply-side movement, it is hard to imagine how anyone kept them in the same room long enough to influence mainstream political thought. But Kemp was, after all, the old quarterback who knew the importance of molding all sorts of individuals into a team.

Reagan and Kemp in 1988

Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images

The economic and political establishment mocked him. Alice Rivlin predicted Kemp's tax cuts would produce economic disaster. Howard Baker called his policies a "riverboat gamble." George H.W. Bush derided Kemp's plan as "voodoo economics."

Yet it was Kemp's tax-cut economics that prevailed, revitalizing the American work ethic, putting paid to the stagflation of the 1970s. Even today—unlike at critical times in the 20th century—there are few leaders ready to turn to tariffs and tax increases to battle economic stagnation.

But Kemp brought more to the table than supply-side tax cuts. During the Carter administration, it was Kemp's congressional operation that constituted a virtual shadow cabinet for the Defense Department, with Bill Schneider pushing defense concepts that were the seed corn of the Strategic Defense Initiative that helped force an end to the Evil Empire.

Kemp also was obsessed with making sure minorities were important to the Republican party. Wherever he traveled (including throughout the South), he constantly recruited blacks to his party. He saw increasing the Jewish Republican vote as equally important.

As right as he was in concept, that passion would betray him politically. In 1980, New York senator Jacob Javits was wasting away with Lou Gehrig's disease, and Kemp was his natural successor. But Javits's wife convinced her husband to run again. Kemp refused to challenge Javits in the GOP primary because he didn't want to be known for ending the political career of this longstanding Jewish Republican. Conservatives turned instead to an obscure Long Island politician named D'Amato—and the rest is history.

Politics can be an up-or-out game. Meanwhile, the graybeards around Reagan had no interest in Kemp for the vice presidency. In the 1980s, without the clout of the New York Senate seat, the influence of the Buffalo congressman who had done so much to create Reaganism began to wane. The Pat Robertson operation helped derail his dream of the Republican nomination in 1988. As HUD secretary, Kemp was one of the few conservative activ-

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ist elements of the George H.W. Bush administration, and in 1996 he ended up running for vice president on the Dole ticket. But the era in which he commanded the supply-side movement was no more.

During the recent presidential campaign, I happened to attend a McCain fundraiser that featured Kemp as the speaker. The Kemp of that evening was the old Jack Kemp—delivering a remarkable lecture that focused on the folly of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. At one point, someone turned to me to express the wish that it had been Kemp debating Obama instead of McCain.

Now comes word of his serious illness. Eighteen years ago when my son suffered from cancer, Jack Kemp inscribed a football poster to him that has remained over his bed ever since. Across the jersey of old number 15, he inscribed the words of Churchill: "Never, never, never give in."

You can bet those words continue to guide him today. ♦

Waltzing Among the Rockets

War, dining out, a high stakes election: Israeli life is back to normal. BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Tel Aviv

The cover of the January 15-22 issue of *Time Out Tel Aviv*—a free weekly rundown of culture, dining, and night life—offers a juxtaposition at once incongruous and in keeping with the nation's mood and the harsh logic of its situation.

Dominating the cover is a drawing of three combat-equipped soldiers, machine guns at the ready, illuminated by a fireball in the night sky, as they warily approach an ominous, seemingly deserted building. The drawing calls attention to the feature story, "Waltz with Hamas," an allusion to *Waltz with Bashir*, a Golden Globe-winning Israeli animated documentary that deals with the anxiety and trauma generated among soldiers by Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The magazine cover touts one other article: "The best soup in Tel Aviv, including recipes!"

And so it goes, throughout the country: War and affluence casually coexist. Even as serious threats loom, the pleasures of dining out and of preparing gourmet dishes at home beckon in this nation awash with books, music, film, theater, dance, painting, sculpture, professional sports, bars and restaurants, cafés and nightclubs.

What seems strangely subdued is discussion of the upcoming elections. Less than a week before the February 10 vote for a new parliament and prime minister, a wide variety of the Israelis I've talked to—from cab drivers to professors and lawyers, management consultants to dentists, journalists to national security officials, city residents to kibbutzniks—had not yet decided for whom they would vote and reported that many of their friends and acquaintances hadn't either.

Yet the race is close. The most recent polls indicate that opposition leader and former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud party will take 26 to 27 seats in the 120-seat Knesset; foreign minister Tzipi Livni's centrist Kadima party will win 23 seats; a surging Israel Our Home, a fiercely nationalist party led by Knesset member and former Netanyahu chief of staff Avigdor Lieberman, will take a stunning 17 to 19 seats; and minister of defense and former prime minister Ehud Barak's left-liberal Labor party, buoyed by the success of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, is projected to win 15 to 17 seats.

Although, with only four days to go before the election, more than 15 percent of Israelis tell pollsters they are undecided, it remains likely that when the dust settles, the right-wing bloc, which includes Likud, Israel Our Home, and the religious parties, will have won a majority of seats. In Israel's parliamentary system, this means that even if Kadima were to edge out Likud in the voting, President Shimon Peres would still be obliged to invite Netanyahu, the head of the largest right-wing party, to form a government.

Whoever wins will inherit major challenges. Israel remains surrounded on three sides by enemies. To the north in Lebanon, Hezbollah, since the Lebanon war in the summer of 2006, has rearmed and regrouped. To the northeast, Syria, which continues to support Hezbollah and Hamas, has deployed missiles that can reach Tel Aviv. To the east, in the West Bank, Hamas continues to plot terrorist attacks; were the Israel Defense Forces and the Israel Security Agency to reduce their continuous operations beyond the Green Line, few doubt that Hamas rockets would soon rain down on Ben Gurion Airport and downtown Tel Aviv. To the southwest, in Gaza, Hamas is down but not destroyed; unless the flow of weapons through Egypt is cut off, the next substantial Israeli military operation in Gaza will occur sooner rather than later. And behind the scenes, on every front, Iran trains and finances Israel's enemies.

The economy, moreover, while in better shape than many, still has suffered a slowdown, and may be headed for recession. The system of public education has long been underfunded and poorly run. Tel Aviv University, Israel's largest, has been grappling with a severe financial crisis and a dispirited faculty. And Israel's

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Muslim-Arab minority, around 20 percent of the citizenry, lags behind in all indicators of social and economic well-being and is increasingly alienated from the state.

On the life and death questions of national security there is relatively little disagreement among citizens, at least among the large swath of Likud, Kadima, and Labor voters who form the expanded center of Israeli politics. They share an anger at the Palestinians not merely because of Hamas's attacks on southern Israel—approximately 7,000 rockets and missiles have been indiscriminately launched at civilian targets since Israel withdrew from Gaza in the summer of 2005—but because of the failure year after year of the Palestinian people to choose peace, to concentrate on developing their own social, political, and economic institutions instead of supporting Hamas's quest to destroy Israel. And so this broad center has concluded that Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza must find a way, neighbors though they be, to live separate lives.

All three candidates for prime minister hinted at this convergence in addresses to the ninth annual Herzliya Conference on National Security, held here February 2-4. But the candidates' distinctive emphases were also on display.

On Monday, Livni insisted on the need to end Hamas's rule in Gaza, but stressed that it is incumbent on Israel to devise a peace plan now to end the conflict with the Palestinians or have one imposed on it.

On Tuesday, Barak underscored the achievements of the Gaza operation, Israel's determination to respond just as forcefully to further rockets from Gaza, and the need to find a solution to the conflict with the Palestinians within the context of a regional initiative that includes Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan.

And on Wednesday, Netanyahu, declaring his intention if elected to form a broad national unity government, identified Iran as the chief threat to Israel's national security, called for economic and infrastructure development in the West Bank as a prerequisite to achieving a political agreement with Palestinians, warned that Israel was yet to feel the worst shocks of the worldwide economic crisis, and promised to focus on improving Israeli education.

The major difference between the candidates went unaddressed at Herzliya. It concerns the future of Israeli settlements, the towns and cities built and populated by Israel in the territories it gained control over in 1967 in the Six Day War. While he almost certainly would not build new settlements, Netanyahu remains unlikely, without pressure from the United States, to freeze the natural growth of existing settlements. In contrast, both Livni and Barak would probably impose a freeze on all new building beyond the Green Line. Livni and Barak recognize, however, along with Netanyahu, that the settlements are far from the fundamental obstacle to peace with the Palestinians.

> So long as Iran funds Hezbollah in Lebanon and maintains Syria as a puppet of its Islamic Revolution, Israel must be ready to defend itself on several fronts. And so long as Iran's leaders pursue nuclear weapons, Israel must contemplate dramatic military measures.

Indeed, the journalists, political analysts, and current and former national security officials to whom I spoke were in striking agreement that Livni and Barak as well as Netanyahu all see that the fundamental obstacle to progress in resolving the conflict with the Palestinians is Iran. Indeed, the case for Iran's centrality is convincing.

Whether the goal is to craft principles for a political agreement between Israel and the Palestinians to build Palestinian social, economic, and political institutions from the ground up, no substantial progress can be made until Hamas, in Gaza and the West Bank, is destroyed. This is because no political agreement worth the paper it is written on, and no economic development that stands a chance of improving the lives of substantial numbers of Palestinians, is possible while Israel maintains roadblocks throughout the West Bank and its army and internal security service conduct daily operations to ferret out and eliminate Hamas terrorist cells. Yet so long as Iran pumps money and weapons into Hamas's hands, Israel will have no choice but to maintain the roadblocks and continue daily military operations beyond the Green Line.

In addition, so long as Iran funds Hezbollah in Lebanon and maintains Syria as a puppet of its Islamic Revolution, Israel must be ready to defend itself on several fronts. And so long as Iran's Islamic extremist leaders pursue nuclear weapons—which by most accounts they could have within a year—Israel must contemplate dramatic military measures vital to its national security that, even in the best case, would massively destabilize the international order.

Much as they would prefer simply to enjoy the abundance that freedom and affluence have brought them, Israelis are prepared for war. It is important for Middle East envoy George Mitchell, Secretary of State Clinton, and President Obama to understand this. Precisely because it wants the United States to be a force for good in the region, the Obama administration must also recognize that Iran will have to be persuaded or compelled to cease its export of Islamic extremism preaching destruction to Israel and death to the West. And, in the interests not only of regional peace but also the stability of the international order, the Obama administration must seek to stop Iran from providing to both the Sunni and Shiite jihadists it sponsors the weapons with which they seek to fulfill their malevolent religious obligations. ♦

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An Opening to Iran?

They've sold us this rug before.

BY MICHAEL RUBIN

During the Democratic primaries, Barack Obama promised to meet the leaders of Iran "without preconditions." He appears a man of his word. Within days of his election, the State Department began drafting a letter to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad intended to pave the way for face-to-face talks. Then, less than a week after taking office, Obama told al-Arabiya's satellite network, "If countries like Iran are willing to unclench their fist, they will find an extended hand from us." The president dispatched former Defense Secretary William Perry to engage a high-level Iranian delegation led by a senior Ahmadinejad adviser.

The pundits and journalists may applaud, but their adulation for Obama's new approach is based more on myth than reality. "Not since before the 1979 Iranian revolution are U.S. officials believed to have conducted wide-ranging direct diplomacy with Iranian officials," the Associated Press reported. But Washington and Tehran have never stopped talking; indeed, many of Obama's supposedly bold initiatives have been tried before, often with disastrous results.

In 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini's return gave an urgency to U.S.-Iran diplomacy. Many in Washington had been happy to see the shah go, and sought a new beginning with the "moderate, progressive individuals"—according to then Princeton professor (now a U.N. official) Richard Falk—surrounding Khomeini. The State Department announced that it would maintain relations with the new government. Diplomats at the U.S. embassy in Tehran worked overtime to decipher the Islamic Republic's volatile political scene.

On November 1, 1979, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's national security adviser and now, ironically, an Obama adviser on Iranian affairs, met in Algiers with Iranian prime minister Mehdi Bazargan and foreign minister Ibrahim Yazdi to discuss normalization amidst continued uncertainty about the future of bilateral relations. Iranian students, outraged at the possibility, stormed the American embassy in Tehran, taking 52 diplomats hostage for 444 days.

But the hostage seizure did not end the dialogue. For five months, even as captors paraded blindfolded hostages on television, Carter kept Iran's embassy in Washington open, hoping for talks.

Should Obama send a letter to Iran's leaders, he would follow a path worn by Carter. Just days after the hostage seizure, Carter dispatched Ramsey Clark, a Kennedy-era attorney general who had championed Khomeini after meeting him in exile in France, and William Miller, a retired Foreign Service officer critical of U.S. policy under the shah, to deliver a letter to Khomeini. After word of their mission leaked, the Iranian leadership refused to receive them. After cooling their heels in Istanbul for a week, the two returned in failure. Shining a spotlight on private correspondence may score points in Washington, but it kills rather than creates opportunities.

Obama's inattention to timing and target replicates Carter's failure. His outreach to Ahmadinejad comes amidst Iran's most contentious election campaign since the revolution. Allowing Ahmadinejad to slap a U.S. president's outstretched hand is an Iranian populists' dream come true. Alas, this too was a lesson Obama might have learned from Carter. Three decades ago, desperate to engage, Carter grasped at any straw, believing, according to his secretary of state, that even a tenuous partner beat no partner at all. Each partner—first foreign minister Abolhassan Bani-Sadr and then his successor Sadeq Qotbzadeh—added demands to bolster his own revolutionary credentials, pushing diplomacy backward rather than forward. Thirty years later, the same pattern is back. Ahmadinejad's aides respond to every feeler Obama and his proxies at Track II talks send with new and more intrusive demands.

Once out of office, Carter aides sought to secure history's first draft with a flood of memoirs praising their own efforts. Kissinger aide Peter Rodman noted wryly in a 1981 essay, however, that pressure brought to bear by Iraq's invasion of Iran did more to break the negotiations impasse than Carter's pleading with a revolving door of Iranian officials.

Carter is not alone in his failed efforts to talk to Tehran. While the Iran-Contra affair is remembered today largely for the Reagan administration's desire to bypass a congressional prohibition on funding Nicaragua's anti-Communist insurgents, the scheme began as an attempt to engage Iran. On August 31, 1984, national security adviser Robert McFarlane ordered a review to determine what influence Washington might have in Tehran when the aging Khomeini passed away. Both the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency responded that they lacked influential contacts in Iran. Because weapons were the only incentive in which the war-weary ayatollahs had interest, McFarlane decided to ship arms both to cultivate contacts and win the goodwill necessary to free U.S. hostages held by Iranian proxies in Lebanon. He failed. Not only did the Iranian leadership stand McFarlane up during his trip to Tehran, but the incentive package also backfired: Hezbollah seized more hostages for Tehran to trade.

Michael Rubin, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, was an Iran country director at the Pentagon between September 2002 and April 2004.

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The stars seemed to align for George H.W. Bush, however. Khomeini died on June 3, 1989, and, two months later, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, whose pragmatism realists like Secretary of State James Baker applauded, assumed Iran's presidency. In his first address, Rafsanjani suggested an end to the Lebanon hostage crisis might be possible. Like Obama, Bush spoke of a new era of "hope." State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler described Iran as "genuinely engaged." Alas, as Rafsanjani spoke publicly of pragmatism, he privately ordered both the revival of Iran's covert nuclear program and the murder of dissidents in Europe.

In his first term, Clinton signed three executive orders limiting trade with Iran and approved the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. He and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright changed tack in their second term. Both apologized for past U.S. policies. The State Department encouraged U.S. businessmen to visit Iran, until Iranian vigilantes attacked a busload of American visitors in 1998. Not discouraged, and lest U.S. rhetoric offend, Albright even ordered U.S. officials to cease referring to Iran as a rogue regime, and instead as a "state of concern." Rather than spark rapprochement, however, it was during this time that, according to the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, Tehran sought to develop a nuclear warhead.

While the press paints George W. Bush as hostile to diplomacy and applauds the return of Bill Clinton's diplomatic team under his wife's leadership, it is ironic that the outgoing administration engaged Iran more than any U.S. presidency since Carter—directing senior diplomats to hold more than two dozen meetings with their Iranian counterparts. Yet, after 30 years, Iran remains as intractable a problem as ever. Every new U.S. president has sought a new beginning with Iran, but whenever a president assumes the fault for our poor relationship lies with his predecessor more than with authorities in Tehran, the United States gets burned. ♦

The New Ostpolitik

America's German problem.

BY MELANA K. ZYLA

No sooner had Russia turned off the gas flowing through Ukrainian pipelines in the first days of the new year, sending tens of thousands of Europeans into a deep freeze, than German economy minister Michael Glos pointed out that "if we already had the Nord Stream pipeline," which would bypass Ukraine, flowing from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, "then we in Germany, at least, would be a little more reassured."

The official desire to replace the current Russia-Ukraine pipeline with a Russia-Germany pipeline says a great deal about how Germany sees the gas dispute, and other global issues as well: Get the small fry—Balts, Poles, Ukrainians, and other former Russian suzerainties—out of the way and let Moscow and Berlin restore some *Ordnung* to things. In the January crisis, Russia cut off gas heading west to Ukrainian pipelines after Ukraine and Russia disagreed over what penalty Ukraine owes Russia for disputed late payment fees, and what the price of the gas should be now that global prices have fallen.

Glos's comment underscores to what degree Berlin has entered a new era of shared interests with Moscow and divergence from Washington. Incoming administration officials would be wise to recognize that on issues ranging from the gas dispute to Eastern Europe to Afghanistan and Iran, the Germany of today is not the partner the United States once had.

President Bush learned that lesson the hard way. His administration at first hailed Germany's Christian Democratic Union chancellor, Angela Merkel, as a foreign-policy soulmate, akin to France's Nicolas Sarkozy. But on issue after issue, she fell short of expectations.

Consider Bush's efforts to expand NATO. In the run-up to a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels in early December, Merkel publicly torpedoed Ukraine and Georgia's chances to proceed towards membership. Her government did the same last spring, ahead of the Bucharest NATO meeting. Both times, news of Germany's opposition coincided with Merkel's visits with Russian leaders, who vociferously oppose Ukraine and Georgia's inclusion in NATO.

Russia's influence "is unfortunate because all of us have said no third party gets a veto" in NATO matters, says Daniel Fata, deputy assistant secretary of defense for European and NATO policy during Bush's second term. As for Afghanistan, Germany in October announced the withdrawal of its only combat troops there—some 100 special operations soldiers. It plans to expand only its NATO peacekeeping force, to 4,500, and thereby add to the risk of creating what Defense Secretary Robert Gates has called a "two-tier alliance," in which only the United States and a few other NATO countries do the fighting. Germany's own soldiers don't think much of their restricted, noncombat missions, with Germany's top special operations general, Hans-Christoph Ammon, calling his country's training of an Afghan police force a "miserable failure" and adding that at Germany's current rate of

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effort and financing, "it would take 82 years to have a properly trained Afghan police force." Indeed, the United States has had to take over Germany's police-training mission.

Merkel supporters try to explain her weakness as a result of her sharing power with the left-leaning Social Democratic party. Yet Labour-led Britain has 8,050 troops in Afghanistan, many of them in combat roles.

Which raises the question: With German conservatives like these, who needs Socialist pacifists? In 2006, after a newly elected Merkel gave a tough speech on making the trans-Atlantic relationship her priority, "we had hoped that we would see a big change" from the anti-American politics of the outgoing Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, says Fata. Instead, "there was a lot of disappointment on our side."

And there's the prospect of more disappointment to come. Merkel is now in an election year in which she will face off against Frank-Walter Steinmeier, her foreign minister and vice-chancellor from the Social Democratic party. Until the September vote, she's likely to channel Steinmeier's views, particularly the pro-Moscow ones. That's because she wants "to avoid having Russia [be] a topic of the election campaign," says Joerg Himmelreich, transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

German voters don't like Vladimir Putin, says Himmelreich, a former policy-planning staffer at the German foreign ministry and banker in Moscow. But as Fata puts it, "Germany and Russia are always going to have a special relationship," not least because of Germany's dependency on Russian energy and large amounts of trade with Russia.

Of course, Germany's Christian Democrats often showed great solidarity with Washington, even in the face of solicitousness from Moscow, during the Cold War. But even if Merkel's party regains a majority in 2009, that tradition may be gone for good. For one thing, the party's base is German industry, which is now heavily invested in Russia and dependent on Russian gas. Germany gets one-third of its gas from Russia, and will be dependent on that source for years—even if it does develop alternatives. Moreover, German companies and the political class are heavily tied to the Nord Stream pipeline project, which is controlled by Russia's state-owned energy giant Gazprom.

Indeed, gas is the leading means through which Moscow manipulates Berlin. Gazprom's gas cutoffs this January, like those in 2006, prompted Germans and other West Europeans to see Ukraine as an unstable partner that gets in the way of their economic needs: Cut Ukraine out of the relationship, and things will be golden is the message from Moscow.

Gas is the leading means through which Moscow manipulates Berlin. Gazprom's gas cutoffs this January, like those in 2006, prompted Germans and other West Europeans to see Ukraine as an unstable partner that gets in the way of their economic needs.

In Russia's gas politics with Germany, the most powerful connection of all is between Gazprom and former chancellor Schröder. He chairs the $16 billion Nord Stream project, which is 51 percent owned by Gazprom. Schröder's service to Gazprom may be the most disturbing illustration of Moscow's influence on German elites ("It has never happened in German history that a chancellor acts as an agent of a foreign company that doesn't always follow the interests of Germany," says Himmelreich), but it's hardly the only one. Himmelreich says Berlin's foreign policy think tanks are pressured by Moscow. Even the prestigious German Council on Foreign Relations, he says, has been pressed not to invite Putin critics or Russian opposition voices to its events.

The head of the Council's Russia program, Alexander Rahr, confirmed that there have been occasions when "official Russia criticized us," but added, "we never adjusted our themes and seminars to their wishes."

Beyond Russia, there's a gap between Germany's tough rhetoric and action on Iran as well. While Merkel and Steinmeier have been critical of Iran's nuclear ambitions and blocked Germany's biggest banks from doing business there, Germany's economic relations with Iran continue to grow. With annual trade between the two now over $7 billion, Germany is Iran's biggest EU trading partner.

Berlin's interests now diverge from Washington's on several key issues. The new administration's best chance to lead on issues of concern to Europe will therefore be to play Europeans off each other the way Moscow does, Himmelreich says. For example, "German policy towards Russia will be considerably weakened if the United States succeeds in getting Sarkozy onboard for a new Russia policy." The United States should support energy transport routes for Europe that bypass Russia, such as those that tap Central Asian energy, and be wary of Gazprom's efforts to gain control of gas interests in North Africa, which remain an alternative source for Western Europe. Himmelreich says the United States should also push Europeans to improve their military capabilities.

On NATO, the United States will need to continue to push to bring Georgia and Ukraine into the fold. Otherwise, Russia will control the issue, using Germany to represent its interests. How strongly Berlin will ultimately embrace Moscow isn't clear. But as the gas and NATO disputes show, the two are now more tightly linked than they have been in decades. ♦

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A Drama-Free Election

The Iraqi vote was a victory for Prime Minister Maliki. Now he'll need to do something for the Shiite masses.

The sun sets behind the historic Kazimiyya shrine in Baghdad.

GETTY

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

Baghdad

Sitting in front of the golden, double-domed Kazimiyya shrine, one of Iraq's Shiite pilgrimage sites, I asked a young man who was politely scrutinizing me what he thought about the provincial elections going on around us. "It's good for people to vote," he said, intently staring at my green socks on a dark carpet. Since he didn't have any purple ink on a finger, I asked why he hadn't voted. Around 8 percent of the Baghdad electorate is still displaced. Earlier that day I'd seen angry men at a voting station complaining about a registration process that disenfranchised many of those who'd been uprooted by the country's internecine strife. Poor young men were probably those least likely to vote.

"I'm not sure whom I want," he answered, raising his eyes to mine.

"Do you like the prime minister?" I continued. He and the other young men around him indicated brusquely that Nuri al-Maliki was not high on their list. "Why not?" I asked, hoping to crack the reticence that a foreigner often still encounters talking with Iraqis. "Hasn't he helped to bring some peace?"

The young man, who had a little button on his jacket, perhaps indicating an official status within the shrine, answered flatly, "He has not helped us."

Although the voting returns for Kazimiyya, a district on the northeastern edge of the capital and once the home of Baghdad's Shiite elite, are still not confirmed, the official word is that Maliki captured around 38 percent of the vote in Baghdad. Many of the faithful at the shrine—lying on the prayer rugs that covered the white marble terrace outside, or among the small legion of the one-legged,

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wheelchair-bound, and physically deformed who'd come to beg God for mercy, or among the slow-moving stream of men and women worshippers who kissed and touched with purple fingers the sacred wooden doors—had no doubt voted for Maliki. A new strongman, not known for his piety, had finally arisen along the Tigris, and Kazimiyya, an extremely pious district, gave him its qualified democratic blessing.

Young Shiite men, the natural constituency of Moktada al-Sadr, the scion of Iraq's most beloved clerical family and the Iraqi whom Americans and Iraq's Sunni Arabs hate most, had given Maliki his first political break. Without Sadr and his supporters, Maliki would never have risen in parliament. Without Sadr, the Americans would never have discovered and crowned Maliki, after a very fitful beginning, as the indispensable leader who could show as much zeal fighting refractory Shiites as he could battling Sunni insurgents and holy warriors. Sadr's allies, whom I strongly suspected were standing before me at the shrine, were, at least for now, lost in the ironies of post-Saddam Iraq.

Shiites rich and poor, secular and religious, those who sought revenge against the Sunnis and those who mourned peacefully—from all of them I've heard the same word used to describe Iraq since March 2003: a miracle.

Making sense of Iraq's January 31 provincial elections isn't easy. That they were an enormous success for Iraq, and for the United States, is certainly true. When remembering 2006, when Iraqis were dying like flies in what the *New York Times*'s Dexter Filkins described as a "symphony of suicide bombers," and when even staunch pro-war American liberals and conservatives saw the invasion as misbegotten, I grow more respectful of my old history teacher Martin Dickson, who counseled to measure time, especially in the Middle East, in centuries, not years. In the streets of Baghdad, especially those deeply scarred by violence, where women and children now bustle about well-stocked stores and an almost incomprehensible array of political posters has been plastered, it's difficult to comprehend how a former pro-war liberal like Peter Beinart could opine, only two weeks before the provincial elections, that the Iraq invasion remained "one of the great blunders in American foreign policy history."

It's not a view, even with all of the horrific suffering that has occurred in the last six years, that has much traction in Iraq. At least not with the Shiites, who represent around 60 percent of the country's population, or the Kurds, who account for another 20 percent of Iraq's 28 million souls. Antiwar Shiites and Kurds are certainly out there—if a parent loses a child to war or sees a child disfigured by a suicide bomber, then nothing in this world could seem of higher value. And many Shiite Arabs and Kurds were Baathists, who understandably pine for yesteryear. But what is striking in Iraq—at least among the Shiites with whom I've spent my time on this trip—is the seemingly unalterable conviction that the fall of Saddam, no matter what happened afterward, was a wondrous event. From the Shiite rich to the Shiite poor, from the most secular to the most religious, from those who have sought a terrible revenge against the Sunnis to those who have mourned their dead peacefully, I have heard the same word to describe their world since March 2003: *mu'jiza* ("a miracle").

Some Americans find that word hard to utter. Yet it is not too soon to suggest that Iraqis—perhaps because they have gone through hell—understand better each year that voting does matter, even if not nearly as much as they once thought. Iraqis just may have reached a point of no return on representative government. True, democracy could still fail here. Little would-be Saddams are everywhere. Inside government offices, they thrive. The complexity and corruption of doing business here boggles the mind: Listening to Iraqi businessmen complain about the predatory habits of officials becomes boring because the Iraqi practice is so crude, direct, omnipresent, and merciless. At least two generations of Iraqis were raised to brutally lord it over their fellow man if given the chance. Millions of men were thrown into the Iraqi Army in the last 50 years, when the military learned, with ever greater severity, to oppress and feed on civilians. (This is the same Sunni officer corps that official Washington and the press are now certain should have been maintained after the invasion.)

Yet, despite all this, even the would-be Saddams really want to vote. They want their votes counted, even if they are less concerned about the ballots of others. I listened to a conversation of low- and middle-ranking Shiite army officers on Election Day. These men, who'd voted a few days earlier, were proud and excited to be a small part of an election. My attempts to get them to tell me whom they'd voted for went nowhere. They clearly saw themselves—and this is a first in Iraqi history—as the people's guardians. For Iraq, for anywhere in the Muslim Middle East, this dynamic—this struggle between the authoritarian and democratic traditions—is something to watch. Only the deaf, dumb, blind, or politically perverse can't see that Iraqis have caught the democratic bug. A military strong-

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man might still arise in Mesopotamia, but his climb to the top would surely produce a nonsectarian civil war. Too many Iraqis—too many with guns—now want a say in how they are governed.

'I want the Americans to stay for a long time," Thamir al-Tamimi said, as he slowly rubbed his small, soft hands. Dressed casually in a sweater, slacks, and loafers, dark-haired and slightly cherub-faced, he would have fit comfortably into any well-heeled Western hotel lobby. He'd summoned a Lebanese journalist friend and me to the Rashid Hotel, the Green Zone's primary watering hole for Iraqi VIPs. A courteous staff of young Iraqis run the establishment, which appears clean, proper, and deadly dull, while Iraqi soldiers and Peruvian mercenaries hired by Triple Canopy, the international security firm that the U.S. embassy and the Iraqi government use to patrol the zone, guard all of the hotel's entrances. Some Turkish VIP was visiting, which put even more security into the lobby and the lifeless garden at the back of the hotel.

"The withdrawal of American troops is not in the interest of Iraq. If America leaves Iraq, it will only benefit Iran," Tamimi continued. A Sunni, a former insurgent, a one-time supporter of al Qaeda who is sometimes described as an "adviser" to the anti-al Qaeda Sunni "Awakening" councils, Tamimi was fairly excited about the provincial elections. A resident of the Abu Ghraib area of Baghdad, he was not running for office himself, though he intended to place himself on the ballot for parliament in the next national election, expected late this year. For him the provincial elections were a dry run, an experiment to see whether the Shiites, specifically the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council of Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, would lose seats and Tamimi's Sunni allies would gain them on Baghdad's provincial council. (As it turned out, SIIC got only 5.4 percent of the Baghdad vote.)

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Tamimi understandably liked the idea of Sunni sovereignty over Abu Ghraib, which may be, after the internecine strife, completely Sunni. Saddam Hussein had fortified Abu Ghraib and other Sunni Arab townships surrounding Baghdad with Sunni immigrants after the 1991 Shiite uprising to ensure that he had more manpower to draw on in an emergency. This Sunni suburban ring became the launching pad for the suicide bombers who nearly destroyed Baghdad in 2006. After the defeat of the Sunnis in the 2006-07 Battle of Baghdad, Iraq's capital—viewed by the Sunni Arabs as theirs, the lodestar that had always given them dominance over all of Iraq—became at least 70 percent Shiite. For Tamimi, the provincial elections would at least guarantee that the police who patrolled Abu Ghraib were not "90 percent Shiite under the control of the Supreme Council." Provincial councils have considerable control over the finances and personnel of the local constabularies, which according to Tamimi was the issue for his kith and kin.

But Tamimi's concern for local sovereignty didn't extend to the country. "We want Iraq's sovereignty checked," he calmly stated. "We want the Americans to interfere in the political process," he continued, almost provoking a giggle from me and my Lebanese friend, who has made a specialty of the *muqawama*, the Sunni resistance between 2004 and 2007. Tamimi denied the rumor that he was a former member of the Islamic Army, a particularly nasty melding of former Baathists with radical Islamists. Like al Qaeda, which the Islamic Army once openly supported, this group killed Shiites and Sunnis with almost equal zeal. Killing Americans was always, however, the organization's *raison d'être*.

Tamimi, who was born in 1966, stubbornly resisted providing any information about who his political godfather was within the Sunni community. A member of the large and influential Tamimi tribe, which has both prominent Sunnis and Shiites within it, he certainly has a godfather aiding his political aspirations. He proudly described himself as a former member of the "legitimate resistance," which for him were Sunni groups such as the 20th Revolutionary Brigade, the Jaish al-Mujahedeen ("Army of Holy Warriors") and the Ansar al-Islam ("Guardians of Islam"). Only a theologian of the *muqawama* could dissect the lethal ideological differences—especially the virulence of their anti-Americanism—among these groups. But according to Tamimi, the Sunnis saw the light when the Iraqi Shia, with the Iranians behind them, destroyed Sunni military power in Baghdad.

"The biggest strategic danger in Iraq, in the Middle East, is Iran. No other country poses a similar danger to the region," Tamimi added, revealing a disposition that remains common among Sunni Arabs: Iraq's Shia are the stalking horses of Iran's mullahs. Tamimi allowed that if Iran's influence were not so pervasive and dangerous, "then America could go." But until the Shia could prove their "Iraqiness"—

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Tamimi didn't say how—the Americans should stop the Shia from fully exercising their democratic muscle. I had the impression that Tamimi thought better of Prime Minister Maliki because Maliki had spilled Shiite blood in Basra in the spring of 2008, when he personally led an assault against Shiite militias in the southern city, and because Maliki hadn't objected too loudly when the American surge extended into Sadr City, the stronghold of Moktada al-Sadr. Tamimi, furthermore, regularly enjoys the hospitality of the Rashid Hotel, using it as his preferred meeting point with all the Green Zone Iraqi power brokers. This probably wouldn't happen if Tamimi had a loathing for Maliki. He certainly seemed to dislike the prime minister less than he dislikes Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the Shiite whom Arab Sunnis see as just a (fearsome) creature of Tehran.

The Sunnis of Baghdad didn't do brilliantly in the provincial elections. All told, they got just under 11 percent of the vote. Add to this the ballots of the secular Shiite Ayad Allawi, who always attracts some Sunnis, and the count goes up another 8.6 percent. This election certainly did not dethrone the Baghdad power of the Iraqi Islamic party of Tariq al-Hashemi, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the majority partner on the Tawafiq ("Accordance") list. Men like Tamimi, who were once part of the Sunni resistance but then embraced the Americans and the Awakening, generally aren't fond of Tawafiq Islamists. Virtually alone among Sunni groups, the Islamic party participated in the elections in 2005 and gained local and national power that certainly was not reflective then of the group's real support on the ground.

But it is blessedly clear that Iraq's Sunnis are now wheeling and dealing, trying to ensure, at the polls and behind the scenes with influential and powerful Shiite Arabs, that they can be players—minority stakeholders—in a democratic process. The Sunni dream of domination has in any meaningful sense disappeared. There is, of course, no love lost between the Sunni and Shiite Arabs. It is delusional to hope that these two groups will kiss and make up and pretend, as so many of them once did, that they don't really know or care who is Sunni and Shiite among them; that they're just all Iraqis. That was never true (although it was astonishing to meet American officials back in 2003 and 2004, especially American military advisers, who really did believe the pan-Arab myths that came out of the mouths of many Iraqis).

A danger does exist in Iraq that the Americans could

Election posters in Falluja a week before the provincial elections.

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encourage a false hope among the Sunnis that Washington will continue to interfere in the political process and in the domestic security apparatus—the CIA-supported, and heavily Sunni, Iraqi National Intelligence Service comes to mind—and that Sunni Arabs can thereby avoid coming to terms with the fact that they lost the Battle of Baghdad. This is a manageable danger for Washington so long as its concerns about nefarious Iranian influence in Iraq do not induce it to take an increasingly pro-Sunni position, especially when it comes to maintaining Sunni Iraqi security and intelligence forces that are essentially outside the control of the central government. Washington absolutely doesn't want to make Iraq an anti-Iranian battle zone, where we choose our friends primarily by the degree of their hostility towards Tehran's mullahs. The light approach here is certainly the better one.

Iraqis waiting to vote at a polling station in Baghdad on January 31.

NEWSCOM

The Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council did not do well in the provincial elections. Neither did the political lists associated with the militant Sadrists. But one should not conclude that these results reflect a growing anti-Iranian or antireligious sentiment among Shiite voters. The Supreme Council could have lost a lot of votes simply because it has done such a poor job in power, in parliament and in many locales. The Dawa, Maliki's party, on a street level is as religious as the SIIC, and probably would have done poorly at the polls for the same reason but for Maliki, whose Basra success last year transformed his and his party's political chances. Fadhila, an Islamist party with its power center in Basra, got creamed in its home town, winning less than 4 percent of the vote. Islamists appear to be gaining a reputation for being unable to manage themselves, let alone the supply of water and power. This may prove lethal. Move away from security issues—as the vast majority of Iraqis are, talking with increasing loudness about bread-and-butter issues—and the performance of Maliki and the Dawa, let alone other more energetically Islamist parties, has hardly been inspiring.

Yet a note of caution: The Sadrists had many obstacles thrown in their way. The electoral law barring any militia from putting forth a candidate list hung over the Sadrists, who feared that their doing so would incline the Dawa and the SIIC, with America's blessing, to disqualify the list. The Dawa, the SIIC, and the Sadrists are all playing for the Shiite poor, who are the overwhelming majority of the Shiite community. The apparently weak showing of the Sadrists may indicate less than the U.S. embassy would like to believe. Only late in the campaign, under the radar of the Western and the Iraqi press, did the Sadrists begin to push their own candidates on the Ahrar ("The Freemen") list, which captured about 9 percent of Baghdad's votes. Increasingly, it's difficult to say what the Sadrists stand for—beyond their claim to be the most authentic voice of the faithful Shiite poor. The early millenarian zeal that made them seem an Iraqi version of the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah appears to have dulled considerably, and their base may be up for grabs.

Overall, it's probably fair to say that the Iraqi Shia community has taken several steps back from religion-in-politics and from the Iranians in this election. There is palpable anger among the Shia about the abysmal living conditions of much of the community. No jobs, no affordable housing, no health care, paltry pensions, massive corruption, and petty Shiite Saddamism among elected and appointed officials on the Baghdad gravy train have all combined to foul the moods of many. Senior Shiite clerics, especially in the circles around Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, are disgusted that the 2005 elections produced so much for so few and so little for everyone else.

Sistani, despite the very active—some would say too active—political involvement of his son, Muhammad Rida, backed off endorsing anyone in the provincial elections. There are rumors of dissident clerical circles form-

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ing in Najaf, religious scholars who are angry that the Howza, the consensus of senior clerics in the holy city, gave its blessing to the Supreme Council in the last election. For these religious scholars, the Supreme Council and perhaps many of Najaf's more senior clerics have shown themselves to be unworthy of the faithful's trust. The terminal illness of Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of SIIC, may make the discussion moot since it is by no means clear that the organization can survive him. Iranian largesse is reportedly not what it once was, and the Supreme Council has failed to develop a grassroots political operation that can nurture talent and loyalty among the Shiite poor. Religion in politics may have gone too far for many Shiites since 2005, and the provincial elections appear to show blowback.

Although it's not hard to find Shiite Iraqis who are thankful for Iranian military aid during the Battle of Baghdad and for softer forms of largesse (Tehran is paying for the refurbishment of the domes of Kazimiyya's shrine, including 800 ounces of new gold leaf), few Shiite Iraqis like the idea of Iranian meddling in their politics. In cosmopolitan Najaf, which contains the shrine to the Caliph Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the prophet, Iranian pilgrims are everywhere, and both Iraqi and Iranian clerics feel free to speak Persian to each other in the street. There is no sense of linguistic patriotism or priority within the holy city, although everyone realizes that Arabic is the language of God.

Maliki almost got himself killed putting down the Shiite militias in Basra. This scared Tehran, causing the mullahs to recalculate whether they wanted to be responsible for the death of an Iraqi Shiite prime minister.

In Baghdad, there is no such equanimity. Away from the Kazimiyya shrine, Iranians are few and far between, and Persian is no language with which to make friends. It is a language of foreigners, who may be admired, respected, praised, and feared, but are always alien to what makes Iraqis comfortable with themselves. All Iraqis know Iranians live in a more refined, richer, more powerful civilization. Persian hubris, which Nuri al-Maliki undoubtedly encountered during his exile in Iran, isn't a pretty thing to an Iraqi. If the Americans are wise, they will continue to let culture and language take their course. Counter militarily the Iranian-backed and highly lethal paramilitary "Special Groups," but don't get too paranoid about Iranian agents running amok, buying ministers, generals, and politicians. Patience is the key here. Washington should primarily use soft power and let 1,400 years of history and modern Iraqi nationalism—which, after all, is a Shiite invention—play to its advantage.

Washington now has a breathing spell in Iraq. The national elections in 2005 were all about religious identity. The Shia were under siege. The Sunnis were on the attack. Iraqi society was at war with itself, and we got a wartime result—the Shiite religious parties did well; the secular parties did not. The provincial elections in 2009 were overwhelmingly about post-conflict security—the aftershock of the surge, the Sunni Awakening, and Maliki's armored charge into Basra. The elections empowered, at least on the Shiite side, the status quo. The district of Kazimiyya is again helpful in showing where the Shia are now.

Although covered with garbage, Kazimiyya isn't poor. The pilgrimage trade keeps it well fed. Most of the buildings may be crumbling, but new hotels are opening, a gold-jewelry bazaar is more bustling now than when I first visited it in the spring of 2003, and all the little stores that line the main avenues and the fetid winding alleys show a merchant class in control. Kazimiyya is a tried-and-true historical model in the Islamic world: bazaaris and clerics intermingling to produce a conservative, establishment-loving order. When I visited Moktada al-Sadr's Kazimiyya office, middle-aged and old men, not young firebrands, were everywhere. Once the violence of 2004-07 subsided, Kazimiyya's "middle class" temperament—the yearning for order amid the trash—spread, penetrating into poorer areas, like Sadr City, where the establishment has rarely done much for anyone. For now, older men are in; younger men are out.

And Maliki, at least for now, is the establishment. It is an odd fate for the man who certainly is, as one Iraqi friend put it, "the luckiest bastard in Iraq." Not that long ago, before the fall of Saddam, when Maliki's Dawa party had some intellectual coherence as a die-hard, virulently anti-American, Islamist movement, no one knew Nuri al-Maliki. Even after the fall of Saddam, few well-educated, politically savvy Iraqis, let alone the Americans isolated inside the Green Zone, had any idea who Maliki was. I know a gentleman who once worked with Maliki in exile in Iran and Syria. He was quite explicit: "He's not a nice man." Iraqi exiles in Syria and Iran—unlike those who went to the West—were always under siege. The Syrian and Iranian intelligence services are unpleasant organizations. Even with foreign friends, they can't resist painfully leveraging their home-turf advantage. One has to admire, and pity, Maliki for surviving so long in such company. It no doubt honed skills

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that now serve him well. Among them seems to be an earthy, suspicious pragmatism that has helped to make the Dawa party today an incomprehensible intellectual mess.

A man of fortitude and irascibility, Maliki displayed boldness in the difficult Basra campaign against the Shiite militias who'd turned the ugliest and dirtiest city in Iraq into a murderous hellhole. Maliki almost got himself killed, scaring the Americans and, it appears, even the Iranians, whose military and financial aid had been instrumental to the growth of the most powerful militias. The mullahs began to recalculate whether they wanted to be responsible for the death of an Iraqi Shiite prime minister. The militias pulled back.

The victory in Basra, combined with the Iraqi Army's improved performance in central Iraq, where the American surge and the Arab Sunni Awakening combined to deliver a death blow to the die-hard jihadists, guaranteed that Maliki would do well in the provincial elections. Since Basra, he has dominated Iraqi TV. And Maliki's relations with Najaf have been fair. His Dawa party, a militant mix of Islamic and Western ideas, has never been beloved among Najaf's mainstream divines, yet it always has earned a grudging respect owing to the intellectual prominence and bravery of its members (many of whom Saddam Hussein hunted and butchered). And Grand Ayatollah Sistani has always had a certain respect for secular Iraqi politicians, especially if they come from well-respected Shiite families—Ahmad Chalabi, for example, the leader of the Iraqi National Congress, has had continuing access to the ayatollah, often to the distress of American officials. The leader of Iraq's oldest Islamist party, Maliki is now seen, more or less, as a man driving secular, not religious, politics.

But electing a more secular establishment has its limits, especially in a country that is going bankrupt. The collapse in the price of oil has robbed the central government and the provincial councils of the means to improve lives.

Post-Saddam Iraq is now post-party. The Shiite United Iraqi Alliance, which Chalabi engineered with Sistani's blessing to counter the Americans and Sunni Arab revanchism after the fall of Saddam, never had an ideological purpose other than to keep the Shia sufficiently united until they could organize themselves politically and militarily. With the Shiite victory in the Battle of Baghdad, the alliance became superfluous. Similarly, the SIIC now stands for little beyond some vague references to Islamic values. As Islamist political parties go, the SIIC is pathetic, and so is the Dawa.

And the Arab Sunnis are the same: None of their parties means much beyond the personalities of its leaders. The Sunni Islamic party, which has its roots in the Muslim Brotherhood, might develop a political platform. But beyond its hostility to alcohol, which isn't a winning position in much of Sunni Iraq, it's essentially a vehicle for Tariq al-Hashemi, the dynamic Iraqi vice president. This has always been a weakness of Arab politics. The inherent weakness of Iraq's Islamist parties and of so many prominent Islamist personalities has now played into the hands of the country's more secular politicians and those like Maliki who may (or may not) straddle the religious and secular realms.

But embracing a more secular establishment has its limits, especially in a country that is about to go bankrupt. Established political parties cannot deliver government jobs and desperately need reconstruction projects because the collapse in the price of oil has robbed the central government, and the soon to be empowered provincial councils, of the means to improve the lives of average Iraqis, who in the south live no better than Afghans. Without government ration cards, Iraqis would starve. It is by no means clear that the Iraqi government can even maintain the official and unofficial (that is, corrupt) patronage systems currently in place, which, along with ever-increasing expenditures for the armed forces and police and the state-funded pension system, currently chew up over two-thirds of the country's annual budget. Iraq needs to sell more than 2 million barrels of oil a day at $50 a barrel to stay afloat. In the next 12 months—the prologue to the national elections—Iraq has near zero chance of either significantly increasing production or seeing the necessary price. And it's a good guess that the Obama administration isn't going to come to the rescue with more money. The United States has given over $100 billion in aid to Iraq since 2003. And in Baghdad, where much of that money went, it's hard to see what good it did.

Iraq's debilitating corruption will skyrocket, as officials desperately seek to carve up an ever-shrinking pie. Politicians have been, to some extent, insulated from voter anger over corruption. But we could well see a breaking point. Maliki, who has done nothing to curb such theft even though he personally has avoided the taint of malversation, could well be shaken by the rapidly deteriorating economic situation. Any establishment party—that is anyone who gets too close to Maliki—could get battered.

The opposition parties are already abuzz with the possi-

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bilities of hurting, maybe even dethroning, Maliki in parliament. Maliki's authoritarian sentiments and his impulsive behavior don't help his case, though his enemies' plotting is undoubtedly tempered by the knowledge that no one really has any idea what to do about the economic freight train coming at them. As one thoughtful Iraqi politician put it to me, "We're all just screwed." Yet proximity to power means cash—the possibility that you, not your opponent, can milk the system. This is not a good basis for parliamentary government, but it may well be the one with the most resilience in Iraq. And although no one need worry about a military coup so long as the United States is in the country in force, corrupt civilian politicians and bureaucrats presiding over an uncorrupted army (and the new Iraqi officer corps so far seems above it all) is a tried-and-true recipe for military rule.

The United States could get blindsided by a rush of events. Diplomats and CIA officers serve only 12-month tours in Iraq, which means, after you subtract R&Rs, 10 months in country. Even the best officers in the world can't hope to get a grip on a normal country in 10 months' time, let alone a multiethnic, linguistically difficult, religiously complicated land recovering from totalitarianism and four years of bloodletting. Further encumbered by the labyrinthine security procedures of Green Zone life, American officials face a nearly impossible task to collect accurate, penetrating intelligence on what is really happening in the country.

What's worse, the Green Zone mentality has infected the Iraqi political elite. Most of them now live behind the Green Zone's walls. Many of them have their families with them. The Iraqi political elite has developed an unhealthy dependence upon their stronger American neighbors. It insulates politicians from the anger of the street—the heat and pressure that they need to feel to connect with those who are less fortunate. Iraqi politicians ought to live with the same dilapidated public services that most Baghdadis endure.

Solving this Green Zone problem even in the midterm seems unlikely. Baghdad probably won't be truly safe, especially for prominent politicians, for at least a few more years. By then, the Baghdad political elite may have become too accustomed to living with guards and enjoying the delightful position of damning the Americans while using proximity to American power and wealth to insulate themselves and their families from a disgruntled citizenry. Elections may not be enough to push either incumbents or the newly elected political elite out of the hypocritical comforts of this life.

It's a reasonable guess that if the economic situation deteriorates rapidly before the next national elections, which must be held before January 2010, the Shiites who carry the banner of the poor will rise. That could well mean that the Sadrists will be back, and in much greater force than their current 9 percent of the vote. The older men will have failed, and younger, rasher men will again have their chance. The Sadrists are the most volatile element in Iraqi political life—the possible gateway for truly nefarious Iranian influence. We can only hope that American and Iraqi officials figure out some way of bringing them into the political system. Keeping them outside, amidst the garbage heaps, is not a recipe for a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Iraq. ♦

A week before the vote, a helicopter carries Prime Minister Maliki to a rally in Basra.

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The Ambassador

How a Turkish diplomat saved 20,000 Jews during the Holocaust

A Star of David is burned outside the Israeli embassy in Ankara during a protest on December 28, 2008.

REUTERS

By Zeyno Baran & Onur Sazak

Turkey's reaction to the recent Israel-Hamas war in Gaza has scared many of us who believed that anti-Semitism could never take root in our country. The mass protests outside the Israeli consulate in Istanbul, the defacing of a synagogue in Izmir, the anti-Semitic graffiti and newspaper articles have raised a frightening prospect. It is tragic that a country that had been the savior of so many Jews—first during the Spanish Inquisition and later during World War II—has been transformed into one whose Jewish minority lives in fear.

This eruption has been building. For several years this decade, for instance, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was a bestseller in Turkey. Such facts make all the more important the appearance in 2007 of *The Ambassador*, Emir Kivircik's biography of his grandfather, Behic Erkin, the courageous Turkish diplomat who saved 20,000 Jews in France from the Holocaust. Too few have heard of his gallantry or his righteous actions during one of humanity's darkest times.

Behic Erkin fought in both World War I and the Turkish war of independence. He was the Ottoman army's expert on railroads, and his logistical gifts proved critical during World War I, earning him five medals from the German government. The Iron Cross First Class was awarded to him personally by the German commander Liman von Sanders, and it would prove instrumental in Erkin's later effort to save Jewish lives.

Erkin was a close friend of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, who entrusted him with the transportation of troops and ammunition to the front lines during the war of independence. Atatürk's confidence in Erkin was complete. "If you agree to transport our troops to the battlefront, I assure you I will win this war," the Turkish leader said to Erkin. After the formation of the republic, Erkin served in parliament, representing Istanbul, and later as minister of transportation and development. He was appointed Turkey's ambassador to France on August 1, 1939—a month before Nazi Germany declared war on Poland.

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From this perch, Erkin witnessed the complete collapse of the Allies on the continent. Paris fell on June 15, 1940. In July, Marshall Philippe Pétain declared himself president of what became known as the Vichy republic and pledged his government's collaboration with the Germans on all issues, including the fate of his fellow Jewish citizens. (The Turkish embassy moved to Vichy, though Erkin kept a consulate open in Paris.) Early on, Erkin sensed that something was not quite right. A census conducted solely among the Jews living in France in July 1941 troubled him deeply. He recognized it as part of a broad campaign by the Vichy government to confiscate Jewish-owned properties and businesses.

He determined to oppose the subjugation of the Turkish Jews living in France. On July 31, 1941, the Turkish embassy asked the Vichy government to exempt those Jews who were Turkish citizens from anti-Semitic legislation:

> The Republic of Turkey does not discriminate among its citizens on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or other elements. Moreover, the Republic of Turkey is concerned about the laws by which the French government is forcing our citizens to abide. Therefore, we hereby inform [the French authorities] that we reserve all of our rights with regard to our Jewish citizens.

Behic Erkin

The Vichy authorities ignored the Turks' letter until Erkin took it up with German officials in Paris, who ordered the French to comply with every request from the Turkish consulate concerning the businesses owned by the Jews with Turkish citizenship.

As Vichy France increased its collaboration with the Nazis on the "Final Solution," Erkin doubled his efforts. He ordered the consul-general in Paris to issue birth certificates to Turkish expatriates living in France who had given up their citizenship before 1940. (Turkey had enacted new citizenship laws in 1935, and, if you did not register as a Turkish citizen, you were stripped of your citizenship.) Many of them lacked proper documentation to prove their ties to Turkey. In one of his orders to Paris, he said, "I do not care if they do not have the necessary papers. Teach them to recite 'I am Turkish. My relatives live on Turkish soil' and issue a birth certificate to anyone who can repeat these ten words in Turkish."

The ambassador also ordered his staff to produce a list of non-Jewish Turkish citizens living in France, looking for individuals with clean records and employment histories. On a cold winter night in February 1942, he summoned a group of people from this list and asked them to volunteer to take custody of the businesses and properties that their fellow Turkish citizens were being forced to give up and to pledge to return everything when this ordeal finally came to an end. He called them the "Turkish Custodians of the Properties of our Jewish Citizens" and presented the list of volunteers to the leadership of the Turkish Jewish community in Paris for its approval.

When Erkin could not get the Vichy authorities to agree to transfer the custody of the Jewish properties to non-Christians, he went to the German-controlled Jewish Affairs Commission and got it from them. This victory was a testament to Erkin's tenacity. While French leaders simply fell in line behind the wishes of their German occupiers, Erkin fought on.

Few foreign missions in France shared Erkin's outlook at the time. The American embassy in Paris, for instance, denied that discrimination was even taking place and called on American Jews living in France to continue to "obey the voluntary laws administered by occupied France." Kivircik quotes a letter sent to his grandfather by the first secretary of the U.S. embassy, Maynard Barnes, on October 17, 1940. Barnes wrote that "we do not consider the current practices discriminatory. The laws are applied to all individuals of the Jewish faith who live in the occupied territories, without discriminating on their nationality."

Erkin recognized the danger he faced in standing up to the Germans and defending the Jews. Kivircik quotes Erkin saying,

> You need to deal with [the Nazis] as if you are playing chess, calculating the possible outcome of every single move you make. You have to continue on your path by calculating the next 2 to 3 moves in advance. So long as you do not take up arms, your most powerful weapon is diplomacy. Diplomacy is a craft of patience and intelligence. I must have practiced it quite well that these Germans kept complaining about me all this time, yet they always awarded me with medals.

Erkin's campaign to grant a Turkish birth certificate to every Jewish applicant who had ever been a citizen of Turkey received increased scrutiny after November 1942, when Vichy authorities discovered that many Turks living

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in France had likely lost their citizenship when Turkey's new citizenship law was enacted. The Vichy government's investigation revealed that nearly 10,000 Turkish Jews were indeed French citizens in 1940. Vichy officials passed this information to their German counterparts.

Erkin realized that it was time for the Turkish Jews to leave France if they wanted to survive. He knew that convincing the Germans to grant safe passage for Jews en route to neutral countries would be a difficult task. In April 1942, he traveled to Paris to meet with the German consul-general Krug von Nidda. He claimed that since the war seemed to be lasting longer than expected, many Turks were increasingly concerned about their safety in France and wanted to return home. He told von Nidda and the other German officers in the room that he had made arrangements to transport back to Turkey those who wanted to leave. He needed the Nazi government to grant these refugees safe passage through occupied territories.

When von Nidda sarcastically wondered why Germany should comply with such a request, Erkin replied, "for two reasons."

> "First of all, Turkey was the most important ally of the German Empire in World War I. If you recall those days, we rescued two of your battleships. We harbored them in our straits. In return, they bombed Russian ports—and we found ourselves in a war in which we did not wish to take part. While Germany lost its war on land, we won ours. Yet, we were forced to share the same destiny with the defeated because of our alliance with you. This is the first reason. As for the second reason"—at this moment Mr. Erkin reached deep into the left pocket of his jacket, pulled out an object and placed it on the table. From that moment on he continued his speech standing: "I am requesting this from you not only as an ambassador from a friendly country, but as someone who has been awarded with the Iron Cross of the First Degree—the highest military honor conferred by the German Empire. For these two important reasons, you should grant my wish."

The Germans gave in, but granted Erkin only until the end of 1942 to arrange the evacuation. Erkin knew that this was simply impossible, and, protesting unrelentingly, successfully got the deadline extended through 1943.

Turkey Recalls Envoy to Vichy; Ties Strained

Strong Nazi Curbs On Ambassador's Activities Blamed

By Frank Brutto
Associated Press Staff Writer

Bern, Switzerland, June 17.—Turkey has recalled Behic Erkin, its Ambassador to France, in protest against strong German restrictions on his embassy in Vichy, a Turkish diplomatic source said today.

Relations Described as Strained

Relations between Vichy and Ankara were reported very strained, with the Turks especially angered at the Petain-Laval regime due to German interference.

The German secret police were said to have instituted a close watch recently on the Turkish embassy at Vichy, forbidding it to use code messages. The embassy was allowed to continue the use of a diplomatic pouch, but, acording to this Turkish diplomatic source, the pouch was opened at the border and examined.

His posting in France was approaching its end, and Erkin instructed all embassy and consulate personnel to continue his work and to save as many Jewish lives as they could. Erkin's associates proved more than capable. When the deputy consul-general in Marseille, Necdet Kent, heard from Sadi Iscan, a young Jewish translator at the consulate, that Turkish Jews were being loaded onto a train for deportation, he immediately went to the station to ask that they be released. When the German soldiers refused, both Kent and Iscan boarded the train themselves. Upon hearing what had happened, Erkin demanded to see von Nidda. When the German sarcastically asked, "What could be so urgent? Is Turkey entering the war?" Erkin responded, "Thanks to you we are about to enter the war."

He poured out a torrent of threats:

> A diplomatic scandal is about to break out and this is the mildest way I can put it. . . . If you do not correct this mistake, a crisis between the two countries will be inevitable. . . . When I tell my president what happened here tonight, I am sure Berlin is going to reevaluate the career of every official who did not take the initiative to avoid a crisis between Turkey and Germany.

To avoid a diplomatic incident with Turkey, von Nidda agreed to the release of all the Turkish citizens in the train. When the train was stopped and Kent was told to leave with all the Turks on board, he informed the Germans that everyone aboard was Turkish.

Erkin met von Nidda for the last time shortly after this incident. The German consul-general remarked: "Now I understand why the German commanders who served in the Ottoman Empire during the war both hated and respected you. I see that the Iron Cross was given to the right person."

When World War II erupted, 330,000 Jews lived in France: 10,000 of them were Turkish citizens, and another 10,000 had previously been Turkish citizens. Erkin managed to get Turkish citizenship for the latter 10,000 Jews and then convinced both French and Nazi governments to allow them all to return to Turkey. Behic Erkin saved the lives of 20,000 innocent souls during Europe's darkest moment. ♦

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Prokofiev at the keyboard. The sheet music is Wagner's 'Die Walküre.'

GETTY IMAGES

From Russia with Love

For Prokofiev, it was unrequited

BY GEORGE B. STAUFFER

In the recent film *The Lives of Others*, the celebrated (and fictitious) East German playwright Georg Dreyman thrives in an atmosphere of protected privilege in East Berlin, peacefully writing works about the heroic proletariat. It is only when his lover, a great actress who takes the lead in many of his plays, is forcibly seduced by the party cultural minister, and a close friend and theater director commits suicide after being blacklisted, that Dreyman begins to question the socialist system. He takes part in an exposé, printed in West Germany, that shows the true face of the German Democratic Republic by revealing the country's high suicide rate.

George B. Stauffer is dean of the Mason Gross School of the Arts and professor of music history at Rutgers.

Dreyman is placed under investigation by the Stasi but miraculously escapes prosecution when a surveillance officer, transformed by the integrity and passion of his surveillee, fudges a report that otherwise would have verified the playwright's guilt. The Berlin Wall comes down, the socialist government topples, and Dreyman goes on to a new life as a free artist.

Sergey Prokofiev and His World
edited by Simon Morrison
Princeton, 592 pp., $26.95

There was no such happy ending for Sergey Prokofiev, who left Russia after the October Revolution of 1918 but returned in 1936 with dreams of working happily and fruitfully under the sponsorship of the Soviet regime. The dreams turned to nightmares as the government became increasingly repressive and critical of his compositions. Even propaganda pieces such as *Hail to Stalin* and *Flourish, Mighty Homeland* did not save Prokofiev from the sharp attacks of the Central Committee. The Resolution of 1948 banning progressive compositional styles, and the arrest and incarceration of his first wife, Lina Llubera, broke his spirit, and Prokofiev, the distinguished composer of *Peter and the Wolf*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Classical Symphony*, died depressed and disillusioned on March 5, 1953.

His misfortune did not end there. To make matters worse, Prokofiev expired within 50 minutes of Joseph Stalin, whose death unleashed a national tsunami of political turmoil. As the Soviet

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Union struggled to pay tribute to its fallen leader and to reconfigure itself for the future, Prokofiev was lost in the backwash—so much so that his death was not acknowledged in Russia for almost a week, and then only because his passing had been announced a few days earlier in the West.

Indeed, Prokofiev's posthumous rehabilitation can be credited in large part to commercial triumphs in the capitalistic United States, in the form of Walt Disney's animation of *Peter and the Wolf* and the use of the march from *The Love for Three Oranges* on the radio show *This is Your FBI*. How ironic to think that Prokofiev was eyed by the KGB but saved by the FBI.

These and other paradoxes of Sergey Prokofiev were pondered last summer at the 19th annual Bard Music Festival, where the director, Leon Botstein, and a dedicated band of musicians and scholars devoted six weeks to exploring "Prokofiev and His World." The festival featured the composer's greatest hits alongside more obscure pieces such as the *Overture on Hebrew Themes* and *Five Poems by Anna Akhmatova*, all of which were examined through solo and chamber recitals, symphony concerts, opera productions, ballets, and a film festival.

The public events have now been supplemented by this thick volume of essays edited by Princeton scholar Simon Morrison. *Sergey Prokofiev and His World* looks at the composer's life and music in great detail, shedding new light on the arts in the Soviet Union, in particular, through documents that have become accessible only recently.

The great coup of the festival was the world premiere of *Romeo and Juliet* in its original form. The ballet score reflects the meandering genesis of many Prokofiev compositions, which commonly went through revisions, rearrangements, and spin-offs for musical, financial, or political reasons. Completed in 1936 with a happy ending, *Romeo and Juliet* was not premiered in the Soviet Union because of *Pravda* editorials criticizing Dimitri Shostakovich and other "degenerate modernists," of whom Prokofiev was the most prominent. The first performance was given, instead, in Czechoslovakia in 1938 before the work was brought back to Russia in a revised version for a national premiere in 1940.

Apparently displeased with the ballet in this form, Prokofiev recycled the music in three different orchestral suites, all exhibiting the tenor saxophone, cornet, viola d'amore, and mandolins that give the original score its exotic color. For the Bard festival, the original "happy ending" version of the ballet was resurrected, with the permission of the Russian State Archive and the Prokofiev family, and a stunning new choreography was created by the Mark Morris Dance Group. Following the premiere at the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard, the production went on the road, with appearances in New York, London, Chicago, and other cities.

Prokofiev in 1939

BETTMANN / CORBIS

Prokofiev was born in 1891 in Sontsovka in the Ukraine, the only surviving child of agronomist Sergey Alekseyevich Prokofiev and his arts-loving wife Mariya Zitkova. Prokofiev was tutored at home by his parents and governesses, and his musical gifts emerged early on. He wrote his first piano pieces at age 5, his first opera by age 10.

After studying with the composer Reinhold Glière he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, graduating with diplomas in composition, piano, and conducting. His first and second piano concertos, with their flashy virtuosity and dissonant yet palatable idiom, were an instant success, as was his *Scythian Suite* (1915), a work derived from an aborted collaboration with the choreographer Serge Diaghilev. The *Classical Symphony*, a groundbreaking neoclassical work issued three years before Stravinsky's similarly derivative *Pulcinella*, marked Prokofiev as a trendsetting composer.

But the 1918 Revolution interrupted his career. Although he later claimed to have felt enthusiasm for the revolution, he decided at the time to emigrate, traveling to the United States to pursue the life of a concert performer. As Stephen D. Press points out, Prokofiev came to the United States too soon: America was not yet ready for his rigorous works and their explosive cacophonies. His inauspicious arrival, just after the great influenza epidemic, was followed by a difficult period of trying to make ends meet. Sergey Rachmaninoff was far more successful as a recitalist, presenting piano programs that mixed his own works with non-Russian classics. Prokofiev was more intent on pushing the modern Russian repertory, and American audiences were not receptive.

He was also plagued by bad luck. Take the problematic production of *The Love for Three Oranges*. The commission came during Prokofiev's second year in America from general manager Cleofonte Campanini of the Chicago Opera. Prokofiev, a meticulous and disciplined composer, finished the work on schedule, completing it (as he proudly noted) at 2 P.M. on the due date, October 1, 1919. But plans to produce the opera that season were disrupted by Campanini's death in December, and the following year the premiere was postponed once again because the company was unwilling to pay the production costs. Prokofiev, new to America but quick to catch on to its customs, sued for lost compensation.

An agreement was finally reached, and *The Love for Three Oranges* opened in December 1921, two years after Campanini's death. The work is an enjoyable parody of traditional operatic gestures, and Prokofiev claimed to have used a simpler musical language for American audiences. Still, the unfamiliar musical vocabulary and the complicated libretto did not please American operagoers—even changing the Russian to

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French (*L'amour des trois oranges*) did not help—and reviews were mixed. Only the March won unqualified praise.

"The music, I fear, is too much for this generation," Edward Moore wrote in the *Chicago Tribune*. "After intensive study and close observation at rehearsal and performance, I detected the beginnings of two tunes. . . . For the rest of it, Mr. Prokofiev might well have loaded up a shotgun with several thousand notes of varying lengths and discharged them against the side of a blank wall."

After four years struggling to make ends meet, Prokofiev moved to Europe, eventually settling in Paris in 1923. There he found the atmosphere more conducive to the composition and performance of modern pieces. He established important ties with Diaghilev and the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, both fellow expatriates. The First Violin Concerto, premiered by Koussevitzky, the ballet *The Steel Step*, choreographed by Diaghilev, and the opera *The Gambler*, based on Dostoyevsky's novel, show a composer writing in a brittle, futuristic style with static, closed forms.

Throughout this time Prokofiev maintained ties with the Soviet Union, and by the early 1930s seems to have been ready to accept the compromise between adaptation and self-assertion that would be necessary for a return to his homeland. In addition, the simplification of his style, seen in his 1933 film music for *Lieutenant Kijé*, points to Soviet ideals. In 1936 he went back to Russia for good.

Things went well, at first. Supported by state sponsorship, Prokofiev quickly composed the much-beloved *Peter and the Wolf* for a children's troupe in Moscow, and he was able to balance musical integrity with propaganda goals in works such as *Alexander Nevsky*, the score to Sergey Eisenstein's film that he later turned into a historic cantata. Prokofiev was allowed to maintain his passport and travel freely in the West.

But this soon changed. Before long he was denounced by the proletarian faction of Soviet composers, and his passport was taken away. In an act of humiliation, Prokofiev confessed that he had sinned in Paris by using atonal and polytonal idioms, but insisted that, in his heart, he had remained true to the ideals of classical Russian music. The new Soviet manifesto was outlined in *Pravda*: All art was to be based on principles of "social realism," which required backing the Communist party line, emphasizing folk traditions, and affirming the good life of the Russian folk.

Thus began a long series of compositions in which Prokofiev futilely attempted to curry favor with the regime. *Songs of Our Times*, written in an unthreatening style, was criticized by the Russian press as being too simple. The opera *War and Peace*, modeled on Tolstoy, had to be revised to meet party criteria. *A Tale of a Real Man*, based on the heroic actions of a Soviet pilot against the Nazis, was denounced in preview and never released to the public. Prokofiev could not win.

His day-to-day difficulties with life in the Soviet Union are traced in correspondence with Levon Atovmyan, published for the first time here. Atovmyan was a major figure in the Soviet musical establishment, serving first as chairman of the Composer Division of the All-Russian Society of Soviet Dramatists, Composers, Film, Club, and Stage Authors, and then as head of the Municipal Committee for Composers. More politically savvy than Prokofiev, the Armenian-born Atovmyan helped to steer the composer through the political minefields and bureaucratic labyrinths of the Soviet government.

The correspondence reveals an energetic composer constantly at work, commonly writing several pieces simultaneously. But at the same time it shows Prokofiev's endless concern with petty matters: the accuracy of bills, delayed fees, securing three meals a day for his ex-wife (he later remarried Mira Mendelson) and two sons, and the like. Obtaining the correct type of music paper—24-stave rather than 30-stave—emerges as a major challenge for composers in the Soviet Union. The letters also further verify Prokofiev's willingness to compromise his musical style to suit the demands of the Central Committee. When Atovmyan warns that the Sixth Piano Sonata may be banned because of a dissonant chord, Prokofiev quickly replies: "Regarding the chord in the Sixth Sonata, I'll of course replace it."

In spite of Prokofiev's efforts to please the Soviet government, he never joined the Communist party or took part in civic duties. For these reasons, perhaps, and the poor timing of his death, the government was slow to celebrate his memory and move him into the pantheon of great Russian composers. As Leonid Maximenkov demonstrates in his essay, the Soviet Union systematically immortalized its chosen heroes, first giving them an elaborate burial, then providing financial assistance and privileges for their families, and finally nationalizing their homes by turning them into museums. The entire process was overseen by an immense ideological apparatus, with censorship boards, repertory agencies, secret police, diplomats, and national media working together to canonize the Soviet Union's secular saints.

Prokofiev received none of this support. Moreover, he had composed some of his best works abroad, in the infected air of capitalism. Within the Soviet Union, he was memorialized only gradually, as his stature grew in the West. It was not until 1981, on the 90th anniversary of his birth, that the Central Committee finally agreed to honor his music at a major music festival, and his 1991 centennial went largely unnoticed, coming as it did amidst the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

I recently attended a university performance of *Alexander Nevsky*. Composed for Eisenstein's 1938 film that celebrates the victory of a 13th-century Russian despot over German and Finnish invaders, the music can be viewed as a form of propaganda, as a thinly veiled attempt to promote Stalin as Russia's protector against the rising Nazi tide. For both Eisenstein and Prokofiev, the project was an unabashed attempt to win official approval.

The audience was composed mainly of students, most of whom were unaware of the score's symbolism. But the music, with its heroic strains and stunning effects, moved them to a standing ovation. Separated at last from politics, Prokofiev's works stand safely on their own, as this Bard celebration has verified. ♦

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Who's in Charge

For that man in the White House, it's a two-front war.

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

Peter Rodman, who died last summer at the too early age of 64, has left us an invaluable study of the institutional problems of foreign policy in the executive branch. A protégé of Henry Kissinger, Rodman served in the national security apparatus for four Republican presidents and, as such, had a wealth of experience to draw upon in framing lessons for how to make foreign policy more effectively, and with less counterproductive friction among the usual factions. But at its heart this book is about more than foreign policy. In the end, *Presidential Command* is about the central problem of democratic government today in all fields of policy.

Presidential Command
Power, Leadership and the Making of Foreign Policy from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush
by Peter W. Rodman
Knopf, 368 pp., $27.95

"Political control over the bureaucracy," Rodman writes in the opening pages, "may be one of the most significant challenges to modern democratic government in the 20th and 21st centuries."

This is not mere boilerplate from which to deplore the often recalcitrant culture of the careerists at the State Department that frequently undermines presidential policy through highly refined bureaucratic arts. Rodman returns to this problem throughout the book, taking note of the frustrations and dilemmas of different attempts to control the bureaucracy. While Rodman makes a number of specific recommendations for improving the foreign policy process so as to increase the president's effectiveness and the bureaucracy's accountability, in the end he is compelled to reaffirm the centrality of the judgment and engagement of the president himself in making the system work.

"The American system," Rodman laments, "has not solved the problem of presidential control over our own bureaucracy." True, but that's because modern theory doesn't regard it as a problem. The theory of the permanent government, or the administrative state, traces back to the Progressive Era and holds that administration can or should be insulated from politics, and that political questions can be transformed by degrees into technical questions and better managed by specialized expertise.

In the American context, it represents the fulfillment of the axiom attributed to Saint-Simon that "the government of men is replaced by the administration of things."

This dubious idea can be said to work, after a fashion, in domestic affairs; we are most familiar with it in connection to independent regulatory agencies and programs. The Office of Management and Budget can be said to be the domestic policy equivalent of the National Security Council, giving the president some means of overseeing the bureaucracy and controlling its decisions.

But the administrative state framework cannot be made to work in foreign policy for a very simple reason—a reason so simple that it is often overlooked, sometimes deliberately so. Despite the relative success in creating international institutions and legal structures along an administrative model such as the World Trade Organization, at the end of the day we really can't get very far away from the Lockean understanding that nations in their relations to one another are in a state of nature, which means that essential political questions cannot be converted into technical questions. Rodman writes in his strong conclusion:

> In the back of our minds, perhaps, there is a technocratic model of government in which [foreign policy] professionals should be left to go about their business uncorrupted by politics or even by policy influence from elected or appointed officials who may have their own philosophy or objectives in the matter. But in truth, this is the wrong model. . . . The abolition of politics is a mirage, and a dangerous one.

The background puts into sharp relief Rodman's survey of the means by which modern presidents have attempted to control the foreign policy bureaucracy and manage the conflicts between the competing centers of power, especially the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA. Machiavelli reminds us in *The Prince* that "good counsel, from wherever it comes, must arise from the prudence of the prince, and not the prudence of the prince from good counsel." In this vein, Rodman casts a cold light on a number of established clichés about foreign policy conflicts, and generates a number of his own *Prince*-worthy observations about how it should work.

Every time something goes wrong, the reflex in Washington is to fault "the process." To be sure, Rodman agrees that there are often process flaws, but in most cases what is lacking was not process but policy judgment. (Examples include Ronald Reagan's Iran-Contra disaster, but also many aspects of President George W. Bush's management of the Iraq war.) The quest to forge consensus among quarrelling factions is a chimera, and will lead to incoherence just as much as mushy, lowest common denominator difference-splitting.

Conflict and disagreement between bureaus and advisers is to be welcomed rather than suppressed because it clarifies real choices. The best national security adviser—Rodman singles out Brent Scowcroft under Ford and Bush 41 as his *beau ideal*—is one who pushes the competing factions to refine their policy

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views and then presents the president with genuine alternatives rather than *Yes, Minister*-style false or constrained choices. But the president has to embrace managing and resolving the conflicts of his advisers. Rodman thinks George W. Bush's unwillingness to manage conflicts among his team, and reluctance to impose his will, was the primary cause of his continuing grief over the Iraq war.

But there remains the problem of how to conquer the subterfuges by which the permanent government—especially the State Department—tries to undermine the president's policy and decisions. One temptation is to try to centralize policymaking in the White House as much as possible, practically to the point of cutting out the State Department entirely. This was Richard Nixon's strategy, which he sought to extend to domestic policy as well. Rodman thinks Nixon's approach was impressive but counterproductive:

> His White House-centered system produced what was probably the most centralized, consistent, and strategically coherent policy-making of any modern presidency—but it came at the price of demoralization and alienation of the rest of the government. The exclusionary style of his management is not a model to be emulated.

Several presidents have tried an inverse of Nixon's strategy, implicitly downgrading the State Department's influence by deliberately appointing weak secretaries of state and thereby hoping to shove foreign policy onto the back burner. Jimmy Carter was philosophically confused about foreign policy, and Bill Clinton entered office with a distaste for the subject and hoped to avoid spending much time on it. Both were compelled by events to pick up their game. Reagan's policymaking process was chaotic and often counterproductive, but his instincts served him well and he got the right outcome on the Cold War, while his foreign policy disasters (Lebanon, Iran-Contra) show the need for intense hands-on management.

"A president who is less a master of foreign policy when coming to office," Rodman concludes on the last page, "or who chooses not to engage systematically, can count on having difficulties. . . . No structure can substitute for a president's sustained and credible engagement."

Rodman recommends that presidents without foreign policy interest, or the desire to manage foreign policy actively, would be well advised to pick a strong and loyal secretary of state—but provided the secretary resists rather than absorbs the views and inclination of the Foggy Bottom careerists. Yet even this idea is not foolproof, as the example of Reagan's first secretary of state, Alexander Haig, shows.

A popular media theme is that, in picking Hillary Clinton to be his secretary of state, Barack Obama is emulating Abraham Lincoln's "team of rivals" approach, made familiar in the Doris Goodwin soap opera, and on the surface might seem to be heeding Rodman's advice to have a strong (loyal remains to be seen) secretary of state. From her years as first lady a decade ago, Clinton may recognize the importance of not succumbing to the blandishments of the State Department—though the thunderous applause from department employees when she arrived for her first day gives cause to hesitate about this.

Above all, one may wish that Obama had read *Presidential Command* rather than *Team of Rivals*. If the new president thinks that he has set himself up for a smoother ride in foreign policy than George W. Bush by selecting a high-profile national security team that can relieve him to focus more on domestic affairs, he is in for a disappointment. ♦

Lincoln the Rhetor

As he saved the Union, he savored the English language. **BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.**

At last reliable count, Abraham Lincoln had been the subject of more books than any historical figure other than Jesus of Nazareth—running with scarcely a pause for breath from the quirky portrait assembled by his former law partner "Billy" Herndon. With the advent of his bicentennial year, everyone with a spare sheet of paper may feel the urge to inflate that bibliography. But is there anything new to say?

Perhaps not, though variations may always be played on familiar themes. Indeed, on one aspect of Lincoln's now undisputed greatness, there is some room for elaboration. We think automatically of his wit, his humanity, his tragic sense of life. But we think, even more, of his surpassing articulateness. We think, that is, of Lincoln the *rhetor*, a valuable if now disused term deriving from Aristotle's treatise on persuasion. That Lincoln wrote splendidly is hardly news to anyone. He was so persuasive when putting pen to paper that he outclassed all other noted public rhetors in our past—even Jefferson, even Madison, even Hamilton.

The ultimate proof lies in his two great inaugural addresses, and to my taste, the subtle letters he dispatched to military commanders obsessed with their own importance and foolishly blind to his.

Who can forget his laconic note to Gen. George McClellan when, in October 1862, the dilatory Union commander complained that his horses were too few and too tired?

I have just read your dispatch about

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> sore-tongued and fatigued horses. Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since the battle of Antietam that fatigues anything?

And this, a few months later, to McClellan's overconfident successor, General Hooker?

> I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government need a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success and I will risk the dictatorship.

(Hooker is mainly remembered today as the boastful general who was utterly routed by Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville a few months later.)

As for the inaugural addresses, Douglas L. Wilson in *Lincoln's Sword*, an informative study of his writing, has shown in detail how Lincoln revised the draft of the peroration of the first inaugural submitted by William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state-in-waiting. He and Lincoln agreed that conciliatory words should follow Lincoln's lucid statement of the unionist position.

Seward, who was no slouch as a writer himself, proposed:

> I close. We are not and must not be aliens or enemies. . . . Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly I am sure they will not be broken. The mystic chords which proceeding from so many battle fields and so many patriot graves pass[ing] through all the hearths in this broad continent of ours will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation.

Lincoln's burnished an immortal version:

> I am loth to close. We are not enemies but friends—we must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

Lincoln's buffing of Seward's draft was more than what newspaper people call pencil editing. It shows that his ear was perfectly pitched to the rhythms and tonalities of English—not in the somewhat inflated form in which it was then written but as it would shortly emerge from the laconic pens of Lincoln himself, Mark Twain, and Ulysses S. Grant.

Thirty years ago, the present writer was sitting one day at his desk at the *Washington Star*, wishing that he had a fresh subject for a column, when he noted a recent letter to the editor. Our reader had challenged a facile editorial pronouncement captioned "Presidents and Words" that had asserted that Lincoln, at Gettysburg, had practiced an "engineering of English," and had by "trickery tuned his language to high effect."

"Engineering," the correspondent suggested, "is a crude analogy, since [it] involves scientific and mechanical principles and writing is basically an art." Lincoln's prose, she insisted, "was an exercise of the ear, not a bag of tricks." Quite right, broadly speaking. Yet as I noted in response there were in the Gettysburg Address such detectable formal rhetorical devices as antithesis ("The world will little note nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here") and the tricolon ("We cannot dedicate, we cannot hallow, we cannot consecrate this ground").

In the background was a book by C.S. Lewis that is undeservedly less familiar than his religious apologetics or the Narnia stories—a volume with a deceptively arid title: *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama.* For anyone with an interest in the "engineering of English," Lewis offers a shrewd analysis of the formal devices of such masterpieces as the Book of Common Prayer and the plays of Shakespeare. For instance, the *cursus*, "certain regular distributions of accent" (as in "*writ*ten for our *learn*ing" and "*them* that be *pen*itent") and the *idem in alio*, "the same in another form" (as in Lady Macbeth's anguished description of her indelibly bloodstained hand: "It would the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red").

Lincoln, an assiduous reader of Shakespeare and special fan of *Macbeth*, had surely noted, and perhaps absorbed, these technical points. Certainly he had them in his aural memory bank.

So again, we aren't speaking merely of Lincoln the good-enough writer, the subject of several recent books, but something, or someone, deeper and more elusive. What is missing is the thread that links Lincoln's prose, formal and informal, to classic rhetorical tricks whose analysis began (and perhaps ended) with Aristotle's *Rhetoric.*

There is always something mysterious—a *je ne sais quoi*—about verbal genius. Adlai Stevenson, who knew what he was talking about, conceded the force of John F. Kennedy with a story about the Greeks. When an ordinary orator spoke, they would say "how well he speaks." When Pericles spoke, they said, "Let us march." The let-us-march note marks the difference between competence and genius.

The traditional explanation is that Lincoln's style—inadequate term, since in no case was it ever truer that "the style is the man himself"—evolved from his diligent reading of the King James Bible, Shakespeare, Bunyan, other poetic sources. Such a background may be necessary but it isn't sufficient to explain prose of the Lincoln caliber. Many of us read classics closely but never write anything beyond journeyman English.

We may guess at other factors—for instance, Lincoln's trial practice in Illinois courtrooms, the art of persuading plainsmen in homespun in scores of jury boxes. It would quickly have whittled away any tendencies to rhetorical flabbiness. And there was, in his time, the advent of the telegraph, albeit a business of dots and dashes. We use the term "telegraphic" to describe not only the world's first instant analogue messaging but brevity itself. Lincoln, for urgent reasons, haunted the War Department telegraph office, where he would sit patiently, awaiting the decoding of battlefront bulletins. No doubt his native pithiness was made the pithier by the economies of laconic telegraphers.

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For the rest, however, not even these factors entirely explain Lincoln's way with words. To say that the style is the man is to concede the underlying factors of native intellect and musical talent, hard as it is, given our egalitarian obsessions, to allow for any form of intrinsic superiority. It is odd to reflect on these things when the Lincoln bicentennial coincides with the age of text messaging, where too few distinctions are drawn between brevity and banality. No doubt there are scores and thousands of messengers in the blogosphere today who never heard of the *cursus* or the *idem in alio*. More's the pity. Something to think about as Mr. Lincoln reaches 200. ♦

The Boy from Brazil

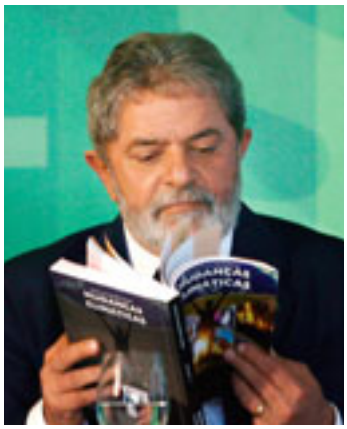
Not too left, not too right, which way is Lula?

BY WILLIAM RATLIFF

Just two decades ago Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was unknown, or distinctly unwelcome, in most Brazilian and American homes. Beginning in 1978 he led a wave of illegal and disruptive strikes by metalworkers and others in Brazil, and in 1980 he helped found the leftist Workers' party (PT). In 1990 he and the PT were instrumental in organizing a post-Soviet leftist Latin alliance called the São Paulo Forum, which some at home and abroad have hyperbolically called a "narco-terrorist insurgency."

Then in 2002 Lula, as he is commonly called, on his fourth attempt, and taking more moderate stances than previously, was elected president of Brazil with 61 percent of the popular vote. Despite corruption scandals in mid-decade that would have overwhelmed most politicians, he was reelected by the same margin in 2006.

Lula of Brazil
The Story So Far
by Richard Bourne
California, 304 pp., $24.95



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So who is this guy? Who *was* he? What is the relationship between the two? Focus on him this morning and he seems to be the plainest of beetroot borscht, but look back again in the afternoon and he seems more like a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. At times he seems to be a basically tenderhearted leader with reasonable programs to help the poor, as with his Bolsa-Familia conditional cash transfer program that links welfare to keeping kids in school. Then he says something to suggest ideological rigidity, political pandering, or senility, such as his comment to *Der Spiegel* last May that Hugo Chávez is "the best president Venezuela has had in the last 100 years."

On balance, since 2002, Lula has emerged as one of the most relatively encouraging personae in South America, quite successfully leading a large and complicated country with more critical problems (and promises) than Baskin-Robbins has flavors. The 2007 Latinobarómetro poll of 18 Latin countries found him the most respected leader in the hemisphere. Of course, some of his radical comrades from his early days find his recent moderation a betrayal of the workers and the noble cause of socialism. But the renowned Brazilian leftist economist Celso Furtado gave Lula some good advice on those militants just before his death in 2004: "You should never give up on your radicals. They give vitality to the party and, more important, show you the path you shouldn't follow."

In this smooth-flowing and enlightening biography Richard Bourne, a senior fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, relates a life story that he calls as "incredible and inspiring" as Abraham Lincoln's.

His account begins with the historical context preceding Lula's birth in 1945 in Pernambuco state, that easternmost point of Brazil and South America that pokes into the Atlantic Ocean pointing at Africa, the original homeland of so many millions of Brazilians. At the age of seven Lula and his family moved to São Paulo, where the boy spent his early years selling peanuts, shining shoes, operating a lathe, and acquiring his less than a year of formal education. This industrial city, during a rough period of military dictatorship (1964-1985), provided the context for Lula's formation as an originally mild, but increasingly militant, trade union leader, as well as his springboard to national presidential politics.

Bourne paints a picture of Lula the man that rings largely true for most of us who have followed or dealt with him over time. By the mid-1970s Lula had discovered "he was rather good with people and in the rough-and-tumble of union politics." Over the next few years personal and public events changed him from a shy beginner to a dramatic orator and organizer of a union movement who became a national figure "with thousands of workers hanging on his every world. He loved the oxygen of publicity."

He is no intellectual, but a highly intuitive conciliator with enduring preferences that have often been modified, or even sacrificed, for pragmatic reasons. His most persistent personal

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qualities "in the fickle, self-seeking, and often corrupt world of Brazilian politics," writes Bourne, are "stamina, determination, and ambition." When Lula was first trounced by Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the 1994 presidential election, he came to understand that, if he wanted to ever get more than a third of the electorate to vote for him, he would have to broaden his support base through the alliances and compromises, some of them unsavory, that are the essence of Brazilian politics.

Bourne notes also that "somewhere inside Lula, by 2002, an ethical dimension had gone missing," this being particularly evident in mid-decade when explosive corruption and scandal centered in the PT almost torpedoed his administration.

Lula lost two consecutive presidential elections to Cardoso, a major influence on his career. The switchbacks of the famous sociologist-turned-politician were more fundamental and in-your-face than Lula's, and not all are owned up to in his engaging memoir, *The Accidental President of Brazil*. Cardoso was one of the key creators of the "dependency" economics that dominated Latin America for several decades, mostly underlying rather than resolving long-term problems. That is, he spent the first half of his adult life as an enormously popular professor writing and teaching the evils of globalization to ravenous young students on several continents—as different as one could be from Lula. Then in the second half, when he headed ministries of foreign affairs and economics and was president, he became an eloquent proponent of most of the absolute "nonos" he had condemned for decades to thunderous acclamation in academe.

As president, Lula has tried to retain and implement more of his original beliefs from his early PT career. Sometimes he has been quite successful, as with the Bolsa-Familia ("Family Fund") program that, by 2006, provided welfare to some 12 million poor Brazilians, so long as parents kept their kids in school. In general he favors pragmatic political, social, and economic policies and has learned that markets and the private sector are essential to a growing nation. Though most bankers, and others at the top of society, ceased fearing him after 2002 because of his largely orthodox economic policies, in the 2006 election he remained strongest in the north and northeast of the country and, in Bourne's words, "the poorer, blacker parts of Brazil chose Lula; the richer, better educated, and whiter ones chose [Geraldo] Alckmin."

Even after describing many of Lula's full or partial failures, Bourne concludes that his "two driving motivations" are to end the worst poverty in Brazil and respect and reward his country's workers. But the pursuit of these objectives, and personal power, have led him to compromise and promote "cautious economic policy, behind which he could promote pro-poor social programs." By the mid-1990s, Bourne concludes, Lula could no longer be considered a socialist.

Still for all his efforts and compromises, Lula has not made nearly as much progress as many in this most unequal of Latin countries had hoped for. Bourne believes that Lula was held back in reducing inequality in living conditions, education, health, and other fields by following relatively orthodox domestic economic policies (without which conditions would have been much worse) and because he warded off frontal opposition from vested interests by working with them more than confronting them head-on.

Most analysts believe Lula has compromised more in his domestic than his foreign policies. Internationally, he has promoted a strong and independent Brazil, in political and economic terms, and full respect for other countries of the developing world, and particularly in Latin America. He pursued a greater Brazilian role in the hemisphere by, among other things, opposing the U.S.-backed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, and in the world by active participation in international conferences and seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council. Lula was instrumental in bringing about a resolution of the recent conflict, which nearly broke into warfare, among Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia.

Ironically Lula has increasingly found himself in competition with another Latin leftist, Chávez of Venezuela, who also wants to lead Latin America as the region's new Bolivar—or more accurately, Fidel—pursuing what he calls "21st century socialism." Just into Lula's first presidency, a top foreign policy official told me, in Brasilia, that "Chávez has a simplistic, messianic approach, while Lula is moderate and realistic, working through coalitions."

That analysis has held up, and Lula has had both successes and failures in the region in dealing with the Chavistas. One painful experience he endured related to dealing with the WTO and globalization, which he came to see as advantageous to Brazil when used effectively. In 2001 the World Social Forum was founded in Porto Alegre, a PT stronghold, to confront the World Economic Forum in Davos. Lula was greeted with loud cheers at the first couple of WSF meetings, but when he could not go along with the "simplistic anti-WTO and anti-globalization cries of his former allies," as Bourne described it, they had a falling-out and by 2005 WSF members were booing Lula and cheering Chávez, their new hero.

Bourne gives us an excellent review of the life of one of Latin America's most important, and in many ways hopeful, leaders in decades, one who can bring along the reasonable left without terrifying the center and reasonable right in Brazilian politics. Still, Brazil faces enormous challenges, and while Bourne enumerates these and the venality of the Brazilian system, he does not note pointedly enough the historical roots of Brazil's problems, coming from the culture implanted in the country centuries ago by Portugal.

Lula's failure to make greater progress in eliminating inequality, and the corruption scandal that shook his government toward the end of his first term, were merely symptoms of the underlying, broadly based cultural reality of Brazil and most of Latin America: labyrinthine systems that exclude majorities and will challenge and usually thwart the very best Brazilian (and other Latin) reformers for decades, or centuries, to come. ♦

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Up Against the Wall

If only the Supreme Court had Washington's clarity.

BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

In church-state jurisprudence, no case looms larger than *Everson* v. *Board of Education of Ewing Township* (1947).

The facts of the case were not sexy: A state law authorized school districts to provide reimbursements to parents who spent cash sending their children to school on the public bus system. Ewing Township permitted all parents, including those with children in parochial schools, to partake of this reimbursement. A taxpayer, Arch R. Everson, sued the school board, complaining that the reimbursement policy violated the New Jersey Constitution and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That, though, was not Everson's only gripe. In a remarkable stretch, he also claimed that the reimbursements violated the Fourteenth Amendment's prohibition of the taking of private property for a nonpublic use.

The establishment clause of the First Amendment begins, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." The plain language would appear to mean that Congress has no power to use governmental power to benefit one religion over another, or to choose an official U.S. church. Since the reimbursement policy was available to students attending any private schools, parochial or not, it is hard to see how it could be deemed problematic.

Everson won in a New Jersey state court, but lost in the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals. Matters might have ended there, but Everson doggedly appealed his case to the Supreme Court.

The High Court's 5-to-4 decision was, to put it mildly, confused. In his majority opinion, Justice Hugo Black declared that New Jersey's reimbursement program was constitutional. In a few paragraphs, he dismissed Everson's crabbed claim about unconstitutional takings. Providing bus fare reimbursements was a reasonable means for the state to achieve the public goal of educating the young.

Under God
George Washington and the Question of Church and State
by Tara Ross and Joseph C. Smith
Spence, 317 pp., $24.95

Then Black turned to the First Amendment question. The establishment clause was designed to be a bulwark to keep out the evils that afflicted the Old World, where "Catholics found themselves hounded," Quakers were jailed, and "dissenters were compelled to pay tithes and taxes to support government-sponsored churches." Black then went off the rails, arguing that there had been a colonial American "movement" against religious oppression that culminated in an effort to strip government of "all power to tax, to support, or otherwise assist any or all religions." In support of this assertion, he quoted James Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance" against the taxation of citizens in support of churches and, most memorably, Thomas Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists.

"In the words of Jefferson, the [First Amendment's] clause against the establishment of religion by law was intended to erect a 'wall of separation between Church and State.'"

How, then, could the Court approve New Jersey's subsidization of parochial schools and their customers? Black's opinion falls into a complete muddle:

> New Jersey cannot hamper its citizens in the free exercise of their religion. Consequently, it cannot exclude Catholics, Lutherans, Mohammedans, Baptists, Jews, Methodists, Nonbelievers, Presbyterians, or the members of any other faith, because of their faith, or lack of it, from receiving the benefits of public welfare legislation.

The bus fare reimbursement program did not breach the wall because it was available to everyone, just like government-provided sidewalks, police protection, and fire services. Did this mean that New Jersey was obliged to make the benefit available to all, lest it obstruct the free exercise of religion? Nope, says Black in the very next sentence: "[W]e do not mean to intimate that a state could not provide transportation only to children attending public schools."

Meanwhile, the four dissenters agreed with Black's view of the establishment clause, and took it to its logical conclusion. The practical effect of the reimbursement policy was to provide an indirect subsidy to private and religious schools, as the schools did not have to expend funds to transport pupils. The First Amendment, Justice Wiley Rutledge thundered, aimed to "create a complete and permanent separation of the spheres of religious activity and civil authority by comprehensively forbidding every form of public aid or support for religion."

Thus, the dissenters reasoned, New Jersey's policy was constitutional.

The *Everson* decision was a debacle that irreversibly plunged the Court into a moral and public policy snarl. As it has attempted to explain what the establishment clause permits and forbids, the Court has more deeply entangled itself.

These obfuscatory adjudications have bewildered legislators and elicited more lawsuits seeking to discern where the contours of the wall lie. May a state provide books or services to special needs children at parochial schools? May a principal recite a nondenominational prayer at a high school graduation? May a high school permit religious groups to rent school facilities?

The list is endless, precisely because there is no wall of separation between church and state. For there to be one the Court had to erect it, brick by brick, case by case. The First Amendment, as

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Black knew, was designed to discourage religious controversies. Perversely, the High Court's church-state decisions have fanned disputes.

The *Everson* decision is a dismaying example of the Court's fallibility. Nine justices propagated bad history. It is crudely Hegelian to assert that the First Amendment was the high expression of a social evolution toward the absolute separation between church and state. And it is factually inaccurate. From the founding of the republic to this day, government and religion have been deeply intertwined. The government does not tax churches. Federal Pell grants can be used to pay tuition at religious colleges. The federal government incorporated the Episcopal foundation that built the National Cathedral in Washington. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have used tax dollars to pay chaplains for more than 200 years.

Additionally, relying heavily on the writings of just two of the Founders was egregiously selective. The choice of Jefferson was especially odd. He was not at the Constitutional Convention, nor did he serve in Congress when Madison introduced the Bill of Rights as amendments to the Constitution. He was minister to France during 1785-89 and his own beliefs on church-state separation are far from clear. As president, he refused to declare days of Thanksgiving and prayer; but as Virginia's governor, he did so.

One wonders how different things might be today if the Supreme Court had taken into consideration George Washington's approach to religion. Arguably, Washington is much more representative of the Founders' views on church and state. He presided over the Constitutional Convention and was president when the Bill of Rights was ratified. Unlike Jefferson's, his religious views did not attract ridicule and opprobrium. And according to this easy-reading study, Washington's approach to church and state issues was a pragmatic mixture of high-mindedness and good horse sense.

Throughout his adult life, he expressed deep belief in the inherent importance of freedom of conscience. In a 1783 speech to a New York congregation, General Washington professed that "the establishment of Civil and Religious liberty was the motive which induced me to the Field [of battle]." While he was exasperated by some Quakers' insistent refusal to partake in the Revolutionary War effort, he respected their right to believe. And while he thought that everyone should bear arms in defense of the country, he was willing to make exceptions for those who were "conscientiously scrupulous against it."

Though no adherent of Roman Catholicism, Washington found the anti-Catholic shenanigans on Pope Day appalling, and called for its end: The rights of conscience in others were to be respected because, he declared, "God alone is the Judge of the hearts of Men and to him only in this case are they answerable."

Tara Ross and Joseph C. Smith Jr. show that Washington's views on church and state also had a utilitarian bent: "To the degree that official uses of religion could be relied upon for the general good of the community," they write, "he was in favor of such measures. If such measures harmed the community, however, he was opposed."

Thus, when Washington believed that religious services would benefit the soldiers who served under him in the revolution, he asked Congress to pay for chaplains of every denomination. When he thought the public would benefit from prayer, he issued proclamations for days of worship and prayer.

Yet, behind these calculations of benefit and cost was an abiding belief that the health of the republic was intimately related to the virtue of the public and its representatives. In his 1783 letter to state governors notifying them of the disbandment of the Continental Army, Washington wrote:

> I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for brethren who have served in the field; and finally that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

In his first inaugural address, Washington exhorted Congress to devise policy based on the "pure and immutable principles of private morality," rather than local prejudices or partisanship. He proclaimed that God was active in human affairs and beneficent. However, he cautioned that heaven would not smile on "a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right." In letters and speeches, Washington urged that it is "our common duty to pay the tribute of gratitude to the greatest and best of Beings," and to "acknowledge our infinite obligations to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe."

According to Ross and Smith, Washington did not view government and religion as adversaries that needed to be separated by a wall. Rather, he perceived a "mutually beneficial relationship" with government protecting and encouraging the free exercise of religion, and religion nurturing the values that sustained Republican self-governance.

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity," Washington wrote, "Religion and morality are indispensable supports. . . . great Pillars of human happiness, the firmest props of the duties of Men & citizens." In those instances where religion and government were at cross purposes, free exercise should be indulged unless it imperiled the nation's "essential Interests."

The Supreme Court may not be able to start church-state jurisprudence anew, but it can candidly admit its error. The late Chief Justice William Rehnquist put matters succinctly: "Whether due to its lack of historical support or its practical unworkability, the *Everson* 'wall' has proved all but useless as a guide to sound constitutional adjudication. . . . It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned." ♦

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Sister Act

Can good writing survive bad directing?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Rachel Getting Married, which opened late last year in major cities, is receiving renewed attention because its star, Anne Hathaway, is up for an Oscar for best actress. She should be. In point of fact, she should win, and if any of her four rivals wins instead, the winner should just turn around and hand the Oscar to Hathaway, because no other female performance this year even approximates the rapier brilliance of her portrait of a junkie just out of a nine-month stint in rehab.

Rachel Getting Married
Directed by Jonathan Demme

Hathaway has been a fascinating presence ever since she starred as a rebellious teenager in a superb but short-lived television series called *Get Real* in 1999. Charming and beautiful, she became a movie starlet in *The Princess Diaries* and a movie star in *The Devil Wears Prada*. Nothing in her limited body of work even came close to suggesting she had *this* in her.

There is so much going on in Hathaway's performance that it's hard to take it in at first. Her character, Kym, is whip-smart, garrulous, mean, bruised, narcissistic, guilt-riddled, deceitful, immature, loving, damaged, someone who has spent her life talking her way out of any corner and, failing that, falling back on her good looks to get by. Hathaway is so true to her role, and so accurate in all its details, that she conveys this all as though she were Kym and the movie we are watching is not a work of fiction at all but a documentary.

Kym is a great character, and all the credit for her is due its screenwriter, Jenny Lumet, whose only prior creative credits are as an occasional actress in her director-father Sidney's films. It is a crime that Lumet's screenplay for *Rachel Getting Married* did not receive an Oscar nomination because, with the exception of the Pixar movie *Wall-E*, none of the scripts in the category even deserves mention alongside this one.

Rachel Getting Married is entirely set during the weekend of the title character's wedding. Rachel is Kym's sister, and she is getting married in their childhood home. The depiction of the relationship between Rachel (played beautifully by another criminally overlooked veteran, Rosemarie DeWitt) is among the most shaded and interesting I can remember. There is an extraordinary scene in the early going when the seemingly loving and calm Rachel goes after her sister with a rhetorical hatchet following Kym's problematic and self-obsessed toast at the rehearsal dinner.

"I thought my wedding weekend would be about me," Rachel says, "but obviously even that isn't possible."

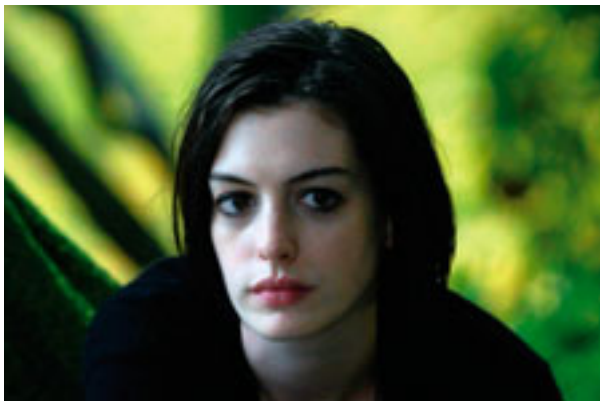
As they go at it—Kym pointing out that nobody knows how difficult rehab is, and Rachel pointing out that all their father's attention was directed toward Kym—Rachel falls silent and reveals that she is a few months' pregnant. Their father widens his eyes with joy. And Kym instinctively cries out, "That's so *unfair*!"

This isn't just remarkable screenwriting; it's remarkable writing, period.

I wish I could report that the movie containing it and Hathaway's performance are as good. But unfortunately, *Rachel Getting Married* has also been overcooked to a fare-thee-well by its incredibly ham-handed director, Jonathan Demme, who has chosen to ladle a sickly sweet multi-culti gravy over the proceedings.

Rachel and Kym are white; Rachel's fiancé is black and a musician. Rachel's father is white and a musician. Rachel's father's second wife is black, and I don't know whether she's a musician. Rachel's mother is white and an artist. Everybody wears saris to the wedding, and the cake is in the shape of an Indian elephant. Men with sitars sit around throughout the movie playing annoying sitar music.

On the one hand, none of this is remarked upon. On the other hand, the movie treats its own portrait of cross-cultural and cross-color harmony—which stands in such marked contrast to the tensions within the core family—with a bizarre, self-referential, and reverential sentimentality that threatens to turn *Rachel Getting Married* into an unintentional joke.



Anne Hathaway

BOB VERGARA / 2007 SNISCAK PRODUCTIONS, INC.

There is so much smiling and beaming and back-slapping and haw-hawing and crying and sitar-strumming that it seems less like a wedding and more like an orthodontist convention. Demme foolishly means us to take all of it at face value, to revel in the wonder of it all, in a spirit entirely divorced from the complexity and sophistication with which Lumet has offered her stunning depiction of a family damaged beyond repair by the costs of Kym's addictions—and the agonizing vitality of Hathaway's etched-in-acid portrait of a deservedly unquiet soul. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

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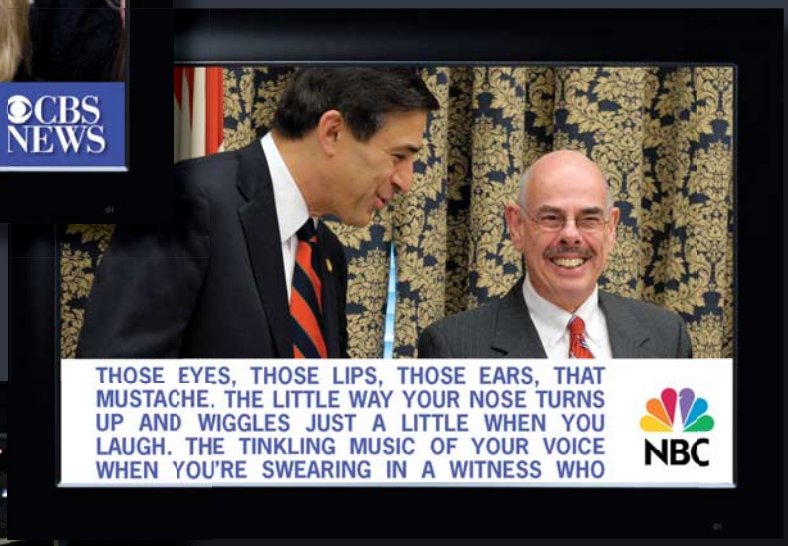
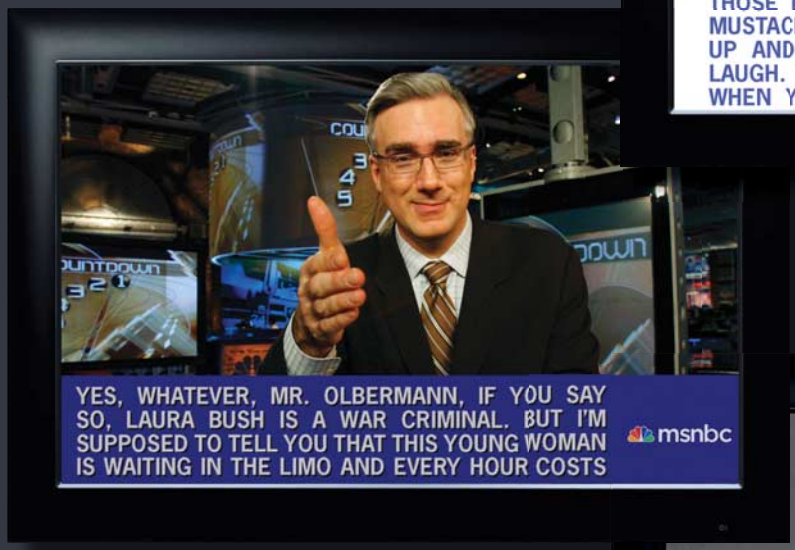
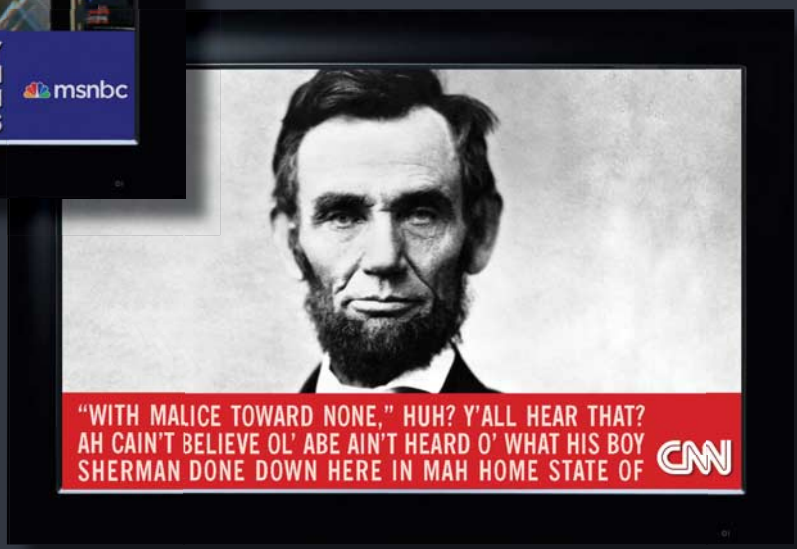
Parody

During NBC's Super Bowl pregame show, while analyst Matt Millen was offering commentary, the local NBC affiliate in Detroit, Channel 4, ran a scroll across the bottom of the screen: "Matt Millen was president of the Lions for the worst 8 year run in the history of the NFL. Knowing his history with the team, is there a credibility issue as he now serves as an analyst for NBC Sports? Will Detroit fans ever forgive him for turning the Lions into the worst team in football?"

—News item







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